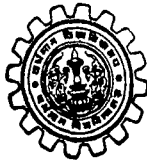


**SOME SOCIAL ASPECTS OF THE
INSCRIPTIONS OF BENGAL
(C. 3rd Century B. C. to C. 12th Century A. D.)**

**THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF
Ph. D. IN ARTS (SANSKRIT) OF THE
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1985**

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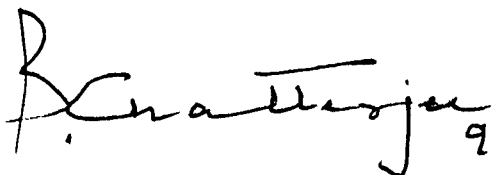
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I have much pleasure to certify that Smt. Kaberi Sanyal, M.A., carried on her research work for four and a half years as U.G.C. Junior Research Fellow under my direct supervision. The present doctoral dissertation entitled Some Social Aspects of the Inscriptions of Bengal (C. 3rd Century B.C. to C. 12th Century A.D.) is the product of her own investigation on the basis of original sources and the same has not been submitted to any other University by Sm. Kaberi Sanyal herself or by any one else. It is further certified that she has fulfilled all the requirements of the regulations concerning the submission of a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Arts (Sanskrit) of the University of Burdwan.

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INTRODUCTION

In the thirties of the 19th century, the process of collecting epigraphical materials for the study of ancient India was initiated by James Prinsep. The collection editing and publication of the inscriptions discovered in different parts of India began in the seventies of the 19th century. But it was in 1887 that the Archaeological Survey of India decided to publish Epigraphia Indica incorporating the inscriptions discovered from time to time. In addition, in the learned journals like the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal and Indian Antiquary were published a large number of epigraphs. The inscriptions having bearing upon the history and culture of Bengal were first published in a collection entitled Gaudalekhamālā by Akshaykumar Maitra from the Varendra Research Society, Rajshahi, in 1319 B.S. This is a collection of the inscriptions of the Pala dynasty. In 1929, the Varendra Research Society published the collection of inscriptions of the Candara, Sena and Varman dynasties under the title The inscriptions of Bengal, Vol. III prepared by N. G. Majumdar. A significant number of Bengal epigraphs (Gupta and post-Gupta period) is to be found in the collection made by D. C. Sircar in his Select Inscriptions bearing on Indian History and Civilization, Vol. I (from the 6th century B.C. to the 6th century A.D.), published by University of Calcutta, 1942. Ramaranjan Mukherji

and Sachindrakumar Maiti published Corpus of Bengal Inscriptions bearing on History and Civilization of Bengal in 1967.

Mention also may be made of the collection entitled Copper-plates of Sylhet, Vol. I, edited by Kamalakanta Gupta and published in 1967. D. C. Sircar published in 1973 Epigraphic Discoveries in East Pakistan. In D. C. Sircar's Select Inscriptions bearing on Indian History and Civilization Vol. II (from the 6th to the 18th century A.D.), published in 1983 we find included some epigraphs of the pre-Pāla, Pāla and Sena period.

The published epigraphs have been utilised as sources for the political and administrative history of ancient Bengal in Ramaprasad Chanda's Gaudarājamālā (1319 B.S.), R. D. Banerji's Bāṅgalāra Itihāsa (1321 B.S.), Pramode Lal Paul's The Early History of Bengal (1939) and The History of Bengal Vol. I (Dacca University, 1943) edited by R. C. Majumdar. B. C. Sen in his monograph entitled Some Historical Aspects of the Inscriptions of Bengal (pre-Mohamedan epochs), published in 1942, examined the geographic, dynastic and administrative information available from the inscriptions of Bengal. Nihar Ranjan Ray's Bāṅgālir Itihāsa (1356 B.S.) is much more a study of social and cultural history than the earlier works. Ray has made use of all available material but has added no new dimension to the analysis of the inscriptions of Bengal. Recently, Puspa Niyogi has made an

interesting study of the inscriptions of Bengal in her monograph entitled Brāhmanic Settlements in different Sub-divisions of Ancient Bengal (1967). Barrie M. Morrison has attempted to study the property-transfer inscriptions found in Bengal and dated between A.D. circa 433 and A.D. circa 1283 in his monograph entitled Political Centers and Cultural Regions in Early Bengal (University of Arizona Press, Tuscon, U.S.A., 1974). On the basis of his study of seventyone engraved copper-plates and one engraved stone slab, Morrison has located the political and cultural centres of the Bengal Delta in four regions, namely, the Bhāgīrathī-Hooghly area with its head-quarters at Karnaśuvārṇa, Varendrī with its head-quarters at Puṇḍravardhana, the Dacca-Faridpur area with its head-quarters at Vikramapura and Samatata lying on the eastern side of the Meghna river. Morrison has also considered, to a certain extent, the position of the donors and recipients of donations in the light of the property transfer inscriptions under his study.

Till date, no researcher is known to have utilised the inscriptions of Bengal for the reconstruction of the social history of Bengal. We have undertaken the study of the inscriptions (dated from C. 3rd century B.C. to 13th century A.D), having bearing upon the history and culture of Bengal. We have examined the information pertaining to the society,

that may be gleaned from the available epigraphic records. The epigraphic records by themselves can hardly prove to be the only source for the social history of Bengal during the period under our study. Therefore, we have to reasonably supplement the epigraphic information by the evidence of the Purāṇas and Smṛtis.

It remains true that due to lack of sufficient evidence at our disposal, the social history of Bengal can not be satisfactorily reconstructed. The data required for social history remain scattered in various literary texts, both religious and secular. But it is difficult to arrange the data in a definite chronological order due to doubtful dating of the texts concerned. For the sake of chronology, the epigraphic records seem to be more dependable than the literary texts. Further, it is difficult to derive the regional character of the social development from the literary texts. On the other hand, the epigraphic records discovered in different parts of Bengal may shed some light on the question of regional character of social development. It may be reasonably held that the social development, which is primarily based upon the means of production and distribution, did not seem to have taken place at the same rate in all parts of Bengal.

The findspots and dates of the inscriptions, discovered so far in Bengal, are of much use for reconstruction of

social history. Further, the text of the inscription furnishes us, directly or indirectly, with information in regard to the position of different classes, castes and sects. As most of the records are copper-plate grants, we are provided with an opportunity to investigate into the relationship that existed between the state and the society.

Again, the records in question suggest in almost clear terms the land-system prevailing in ancient Bengal. There is no denying the fact that the stratification of the society was determined, to a large extent, by the land-system or relations based upon the land-economy. A study of the records also reveals that various ethnic elements were merged to form the population of ancient Bengal. Taking all these into our consideration, it would not be unreasonable to investigate into the social aspects of the inscriptions of Bengal from C. 3rd century B.C. to C. 13th century A.D.

Although the epigraphic source is to be considered as the main foundation of our study, the data may also be derived from the literary texts, especially the Purāṇas and the Smṛtis, which may be considered as evidence of corroborative nature. Of the Purāṇas, the Brhaddharma and Brahmavaivarta, which are of late date, are associated with Bengal. Besides,

the works of the Smṛti-niyandhakāras of pre-Raghunandana age deserve scrutiny before utilisation of their data for reconstruction of the social history of Bengal.

The scheme of the present work may be shown by the organization of chapters given below :-

Ch.	I.	Population Composition in Bengal
"	II.	Caste system : Brāhmaṇas
Sec.	I.	Classification of the Brāhmaṇas
"	II.	Position of the Brāhmaṇas
Ch.	III.	Caste system : Mixed - Castes
"	IV.	Social hierarchy based on the land-system
"	V.	Social structure : Rural and Urban
"	VI.	State and Society
"	VII.	Caste and Class.

Anthropological and linguistic approaches have revealed so far various ethnic elements which, by degrees, formed the society in ancient Bengal. Chapter I makes an attempt to examine the question in the light of the epigraphic records. From the epigraphs may be derived the (a) words of Austrian or Dravidian origin referring to names of places, commodities of everyday use and socio-economic religious concepts ; (b) names of some tribal castes ; (c) names of some foreign

tribes. These data may be fruitfully used to size up the ethnic stratification of the society. In this connection, it may be pointed out that an index of all the epigraphic records discovered so far in Bengal (undivided) and the adjacent areas has been prepared for the purpose. The epigraphic approach goes to confirm more or less the findings of the anthropologists and the linguists who have suggested the presence of the pre-Aryan and pre-Dravidian elements along with Indo-Aryan ones on the surface. Of course, the dated records help us, to a considerable extent, to comprehend more clearly the range of time which witnessed the gradual growth of the Bengalis who formed the society under our study.

The object of chapter II is to study the classification and position of the Brāhmaṇas. The Brāhmanical settlements in different parts of Bengal, suggested by internal as well as external evidence of epigraphs, determine the geographical nomenclature of different classes of Brāhmaṇas. The claim to superiority (kulinism) of a particular class of Brahmins may be examined to suggest whether it is a myth or reality. Again, an alienation of the Bengali Brahmins, in general, from the Vedic rites and rituals seem to have brought in a classification that refers to Vaidika and non-Vaidika. The importation of a class of Śākadvīpī Brāhmaṇas led to the formation of the Graha-vipra caste, as has been suggested previously by other scholars.

The epigraphs, no doubt, furnish us with copious evidence indicating the most privileged position of the Brāhmanas who were hardly Brāhmanical in their way of life. An alliance of the priestly class with the ruling class that is indicated by the epigraphic records suggests a compact between the two classes for mutual protection of their social rights and privileges. The Smṛtis refer to the avocations of the Brahmins adopted in times of emergency. The epigraphs appear to corroborate and confirm the Smṛti view. But the question remains whether the Brāhmanas in ancient Bengal had to undergo a process of Prāyaścitta (atonement) for adopting occupations, beyond the sanction of the Dharmaśāstras, or their position was compromised socially in any way. The priestly class, of course, includes not only the Brāhmanas but also the Buddhist priests and scholars.

Chapter III deals with the theory of mixed castes as enunciated in the Smṛtis and Purāṇas. The theory of Varnasamkara based upon the system of anuloma and pratiloma marriages needs re-examination in the light of epigraphic evidences. The indexing of the records has shown not only nomenclatures of some mixed-castes but also expressions referring to agricultural, commercial and industrial commodities of various kinds which presuppose the existence of

different occupational castes. The occupation-theory, of course, does not hold good in all cases, although it helps us to trace their origin. As for example, the Kāyasthas, who were originally Scribes and Accountants, are found to have adopted different kinds of administrative jobs in the hierarchy of the State. The Vaidyas originated as physicians but are found to have followed the footsteps of the Brāhmaṇas in adopting ~~other~~ avocations other than medical. It, therefore, appears that the mobility in the caste-system synchronises with the gradual development in the economic life. The Vaṇiks including Śreṣṭhin and Sārthavāha, who had enjoyed state patronage till about eighth century A.D., latter on lost their privileged position on account of a shift of emphasis from urban to rural economy. Vallāla-sena's dictates degrading the position of the merchants may be considered in this connection. The process of detribalisation that led to the amalgamation of some dissident groups belonging to either the Austric or Dravidian stock, has also to be taken into consideration as one of the factors contributing to the increase in the number of the lower castes in the society. Religious sects also were sometimes recognised as castes that did not lose their separate identity by absorbing themselves into other Smārta castes.

Most of the epigraphic records of Bengal are land-grants recording sale, purchase and donation of land. The donors belong mainly to the ruling class and the donees to the priestly class. In chapter IV an attempt has been made to unravel the social pattern as it was built up on the existing land-system. The land-records give us an insight into the hierarchy based upon the land-system, the hierarchy which was headed by the king and at the bottom of which stood the Karṣakas or the cultivators. Recently, a controversy has arisen with regard to the appearance of feudalism in India, especially in Bengal. In this chapter a fresh enquiry into the epigraphic data has been made to examine the arguments in favour of and against the theory of feudalism. In spite of the hierarchy in the administration that is apparent from the available records, the feudal relations between different strata of the society, based upon the prevailing land-system, may still remain an unsettled question.

Most of the land-grants of Bengal record land-transactions in the rural areas. Incidentally, there are references to the victorious camps, jayaskandhāvāras, wherefrom the grants were issued. The victorious camps are often treated by scholars as the capitals or cities where administrative head-quarters were established. Reasonably enough,

the question has been raised in regard to the relations between the urban and rural areas. An attempt has been made in Chapter V to classify, as far as possible, the villages and towns referred to in epigraphic records and also some contemporary literary texts. An investigation has been made to ascertain the class-structure of the rural society and compare it with that of the urban areas. The question has been raised whether the village-society was ageless and the theory of 'Asiatic mode' is valid. Further, the socio-economic pattern in the urban areas has been examined to indicate whether the economy of exchange continued simultaneously with the self-sufficient economy of the villages. We have examined the view that the urban life, showing symptoms of affluence and luxuries, was based upon an exploitation of the surplus production of the villages.

Chapter VI deals with the relations between the State and society. The State is, no doubt, represented by the king and his bureaucracy and the society by the castes and classes. The epigraphic records appear to suggest that different classes of the society joined the bureaucracy and put in their services to the king. However, political thinkers of ancient India like Kauṭilya, Manu, Yājñavalkya, Nārada and Bṛhaspati have emphasised ~~upon~~ the predominant position of Svāmin or king among the seven Prakṛtis or elements of State. Naturally, the question may be asked whether the

rulers in Bengal discharged their functions embodied in Rājadharmā and maintained the society based upon Varṇāśrama. It is interesting to note that some of the Buddhist kings of Bengal, who did not believe in the social order sanctioned by the Brāhmanists, faithfully followed the policy of Cāturvarṇya-system of the Hindu law-givers. Reasonably enough, it may be held that, in some way or other, the land-system and the hierarchy based on it, on which the king depended mainly for filling up his treasury (kośa), was intimately related with the Cāturvarṇya system, the social order as enjoined by the Brāhmanical law-givers. Obviously, the rulers, irrespective of their socio-religious views, did not run the risk of deviating from the age-old policy. Buddhism and the mercantile class, under whose patronage the religion flourished, succumbed to an attitude of the society that was consistently inclined towards land-economy and casteism.

Most of the scholars have so far depended upon the late Purāṇas like the Bṛhaddharma and the Brahmavaivarta. In the concluding Chapter VII we have shown to what extent the findings from the Purāṇas are confirmed by the epigraphic evidence. Further, the caste-system in Bengal, which was at variance with that in other parts in India, coexisted with a well-knit class-structure comprising people belonging to different occupations and enjoying social privileges in

different degrees. In fact, the epigraphs give us an insight into the caste-system through the class-structure represented by different occupational or professional groups. The Purānic concept of the division of the society between the Brahmins and the non-Brahmins reflects the classification of the entire population into priestly and non priestly classes. Again, the epigraphs often refer to different grades in the ruling class which are conspicuous by their absence in the Purāṇas. The mixed-castes, which are often referred to in the Purāṇas as well as in the epigraphic records, may be broadly divided into agrarian, mercantile and artizan classes. The correspondence between the castes and the classes has thus been investigated into.

I have a sacred duty of acknowledging my indebtedness to Professor Dr. Siddheswar Chattopadhyaya under whose inspiration I began to work at the Post-Graduate Department of Sanskrit, the University of Burdwan. I remain grateful to the teachers of the Department of Sanskrit, Burdwan University, including Professor Anantalal Thakur, for their kind cooperation and affectionate patronage. I collected material from the Central Library, Burdwan University, the Sanskrit Sāhitya Parishad, Calcutta, the Asiatic Society, Calcutta, National Library, Calcutta and the Central Library, Viśvabhāratī, for which I remain indebted to the authorities concerned. The

School of Oriental and African Studies, London, has obliged me by despatching an unpublished thesis approved by University of London to the National Library, Calcutta, at my request. Dr. Ashok Chattopadhyaya (Śāstri), Head of the Department of Sanskrit, Calcutta University, has also encouraged me by his constructive suggestions.

Above all, I owe my indebtedness to my Research Supervisor Professor Dr. Bhaskar Chattopadhyaya, Head of the Department of History, Burdwan University, but for whose constant guidance it would not have been possible for me to bring the thesis to its present shape.

Kaberi Sanyal.

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Abbreviations

- AS : Kautilya's Arthaśāstra ed by R.G.Basak, Calcutta, Vol. I, 1977, Vol. II, 1981.
- ASIR : Archaeological Survey of India, Annual Reports.
- BI : Bāṅgalīr Itihāsa by Nihar Ranjan Ray, Calcutta, 1356 B.S.
- BL : Bhandarkar's List of Inscriptions of Northern India (Appendix to Epigraphia Indica, Vols. XIX to XXIII).
- BRDP : Brhaddharma Purāṇa, Ed. H.P.Sastri, Bibliotheca Indica Series, Calcutta, 1897.
- BRS : Brāhmaṇasarvasva, Ed. Durgamahan Bhattacharya, Sanskrit Sāhitya Parishat, Calcutta, 1960.
- BRVP : Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa, Ed. Panchanan Tarkaratna, Calcutta, 1827 Śaka.
- CBI : Corpus of Bengal Inscriptions, Ed. Ramaranjan Mukherji and Sachindra Kumar Maity, Calcutta, 1967.
- Cent : Century.
- CP : Copper Plate
- CPS : Copper-plates of Sylhet, Vol. I, Ed, Kamalakanta Gupta, Sylhet, 1967.
- DHNI : Dynastic History of Northern India, Vol.I, by H. C. Ray, New Delhi, 1973.
- EDEP : Epigraphic Discoveries in East Pakistan, by D. C. Sircar, Calcutta, 1973.
- EI : Epigraphia Indica.

Ep. Ind. 1973
was delivered

- GL : Gaṇḍalekhamālā, Ed. Akshaya Kumar Maitra, Varendra Research Society, Rajshahi, 1919.
- HAB : History of Ancient Bengal, by R. C. Majumdar, Calcutta, 1974.
- HD : History of Dharmaśāstra, Vol.II, Pt-I, by P.V.Kane, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, 1941.
- IA : Indian Antiquary.
- IB : Inscriptions of Bengal, Vol.III, Ed. N.G.Majumder, Rajshahi, 1929.
- IC : Indian Culture.
- IEG : Indian Epigraphical Glossary, by D.C. Sircar, Delhi, 1966.
- IHQ : Indian Historical Quarterly.
- Inscr : Inscription.
- JAHS : Journal of the Andhra Historical Research Society.
- JASB : Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.
- JASL : Journal of the Asiatic Society, Letters.
- JBORS : Journal of Bihar and Orissa Research Society.
- JPASB : Journal and Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.
- JRASBL : Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, Letters.
- KNS : Kāmandaka Nītisāra, Trivandrum Sanskrit Series, Trivandrum, 1912.
- Mbh : Mahābhārata

- MS : Manusāṃhitā ; Ed. Mathurānāth Tarkaratna, Calcutta, 1932.
- MASB : Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.
- PASB : Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.
- PHAI : Political History of Ancient India, by H. C. Raychaudhuri, Fifth Edition, University of Calcutta, 1950.
- PIHC : Proceedings of Indian Historical Congress.
- PRP : Prāyaścittaprakaraṇam of Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva, Ed. Girishchandra Vedāntatīrtha, Rajshahi, 1927.
- RC : Rāmacaritam by Sandhyā Karanandin, Ed. M. M. Haraprasad Sastri, Asiatic Society, Calcutta, 1910.
- SI : Selection Inscriptions Vols. I & II, Ed. D. C. Sircar, Calcutta, 1945 & Delhi, 1983.
- SHAIB : Some Historical Aspects of the Inscriptions of Bengal, Binaychandra Sen, University of Calcutta, 1942.
- SNS : Śukranītisāra, Ed. Jīvānanda Vidyāsagar, Calcutta, 1890.
- VSSP : Vaṅgīya Sāhitya Parishat Patrikā.

CHAPTER I

Population composition in ancient Bengal

Anthropological and linguistic studies have revealed so far various ethnic elements which, by stages, formed the population of Bengal. An attempt may be made to examine the inferences, drawn so far, in the light of epigraphic records discovered in Bengal.

The epigraphic data may be analysed thus : (a) words or expressions of Austric or Dravidian origin referring to names of places, commodities of everyday use and expressions of socio-economic and religious import ; (b) references to some aboriginal tribes ; and (c) references to some tribes of foreign origin. Most of the epigraphs are composed in Sanskrit and in some of them classical Kāvya-style is found to have been introduced. The use of Sanskrit on a wider scale may be traced from the Gupta period onwards and indicates the advent of the Indo - Aryan - speaking people in a country that had been originally inhabited by the Austric and Dravidian speaking peoples.

Pre-Aryan element : Dravidian.

In the inscriptions of Bengal dated from 5th century A.D. onwards, we may trace geographical names, names of

places, rivers or hills, flora and fauna as well as proper names which seem to be of pre-Aryan origin. Apparently, there was an attempt to give those names a Sanskritised forms, for which it is difficult to distinguish the pre-Aryan elements in the words or expressions concerned. But we may attempt to find out some Dravidian or Austric words used as either suffixes or prefixes in the formation of Sanskrit terms, words or expressions. The words like, hiṭṭi, bhiṭṭi, viṭi, hiṣṭi, gaḍḍa, gaḍḍi, pola, vola and haṇḍa, kunda, kundi, vada, cavati, cavada seem to be of Dravidian origin.¹

The words like jolā, joli, jaṭikā jaṭā are used in the place-names, like Jolāri-kṣetra (Gunāighar c. p. of Vainyagupta, G.E. 188 = 507 A. D.)², Vidyādharaṇḍikā (Ghugrāhāṭi c. p. of Samācāradeva)³ Khaṇḍaṇḍikā (Mallasarul c. p. of Vijayasena, 6th century A. D.)⁴ Dharmajōṭikā, Pinḍāravīṭi-jōṭikā (Khalimpur c. p. of Dharmapala)⁵, Naḍajoli (Kamauli

1. S. K. Chatterji, Origin and Development of Bengali language, Calcutta, 1979, P. 65.

2. C B I. P. 67.

3. Ep. Ind. Vol. XVIII, P. 74 ff.

4. C B I. P. 88.

5. Ibid. P. 99.

Grant of Vaidyadeva)⁶, Yolāmaṇḍala (Dhulla c. p. of Śrīcandra)⁷. These may be compared to Kanarese - jallu, Telegu dzöllu "saliva", also Kanarese loru, "drip, flow, trickle". The word Naḍa in Naḍajoli seems to be derived from Dravidian Nader "walking" and the term should, therefore, mean "a stream that may be crossed on foot".

The word 'Naḍa' has been shown as a specimen of non-Sanskrit word contained in the Dravidian languages⁸. The words bhiṭṭi and hiṭṭi occurring in the place-names like Śrīhastinībhiṭṭa (Bhuvaneswar Praśasti of Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva)⁹, Campahitti (Mānāhali Grant of Madanapāla)¹⁰, Pindāraṇiṭṭi (Khalimpur c. p. of Dharmapāla)¹¹, Vāllahiṭṭā (Naihaṭi c. p. of Vallālasena)¹² Velahiṭṭi (Tarpandighi Grant of Lakṣmaṇasena)¹³. The conjunct 'ṣṭ' seems to be the Sanskritised form of 'ṭṭ'¹⁴ which may be compared to Tamil viḍu, viṭṭu "house"¹⁵. In modern Bengali, bhiṭṭi

6. Ibid. P. 377.

7. EI. XXXIII, P. 134.

8. Robert Caldwell, A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian, New Delhi, 1974, P. 585.

9. CBI. P. 351.

10. Ibid. P. 216.

11. Ibid. P. 99.

12. Ibid. P. 262.

13. Ibid. P. 293.

14. S. K. Chatterjee, op. cit. P. 66.

15. Ibid. P. 66.

is used as bhiṭi or bhiṭā "homeland or homestead land".

We may also compare gaḍḍi, gaḍḍa, guḍi occurring in Ahua - gaḍḍi, Sura - koṇā - gaḍḍi (Naihaṭi c. p. of Vallālasena)¹⁶, Śilagudī (Kamauli Grant of Vaidyadeva, cf. modern Siligudi, Jalpaigudi)¹⁷ with the common Telegu affix gaḍḍa, Kanarese gaḍḍe "lump, mass, clot". Again we may compare pōla, vōla "bank, brink, edge" with Telegu Pōlamu "field, corn-land", Kannāḍa pōla "field". In the epigraphs we find place-names like Jayāratipola, Uṇaipola, Ajhaḍa - cauvola, Dhṛavola (Kamauli Grant of Vaidyadeva)¹⁸, Ugravoraka (= vola ?, Ashrafput c. p. no. 1 of Devakhadga)¹⁹ Sūpakāravoraka, Simhavoraka, karavatti-voraka (Maināmatī c. p. no. 1 of Ladaḥacandra)²⁰.

Haṇḍa or Haḍā is used in some of the place-names found in epigraphs as "Phullahaṇḍā" (Maināmatī c. p. no. 1 of Ladaḥacandra)²¹, Tikṣṇahaṇḍa (Barrackpore c. p. of Vijayasena)²²,

16. CBI. P. 262.

17. Ibid. P. 377.

18. Ibid.

19. MASB. Vol. I (1905-7), P. 85.

20. EDEP. P. 73.

21. Ibid.

22. IB. P. 57.

Lauhaṇḍā, Jayajāhaḍā (Madhyapāḍā Grant of Viśvarūpasena)²³.

The suffix seems to have an affinity with Tamil Andai "nearness", "vicinity", "raised side of a field boundary"²⁴.

The words like Kuṇḍa, Kuṇḍi are traced in Śriksikuṇḍa, Silakunda (Farīdpur c.p.s. of Dharmaditya and Gopacandra)²⁵,

Nandiharipākunḍi (Tarpandighi Grant of Lakṣmaṇasena)²⁶,

Mālikākuṇḍaparīsarabhū (Śaktipur c. p. Grant of Lakṣmaṇasena)²⁷.

The suffixes resemble closely Telegu kōṇḍa "hill, rock", which may be compared to Bengali kūra "heap", "little hillock"²⁸.

The word Cavaṭi found as place-name in the Bāngarh c. p. inscription of Mahīpāla I²⁹ seems to have been derived from Telegu or Kanarese Cāvaḍi³⁰.

There are several other place-names found in the inscriptions bearing phonetic peculiarities of the Dravidian language group. The use of cerebrals and double consonants medially, which are characteristic of the languages of

23. CBI. PP. 326-327.

24. S.K.Chatterji, op. cit., P. 66.

25. CBI. PP. 76, 84.

26. Ibid. P. 293.

27. EI. Vol. XXI, P. 211 ff.

28. S.K.Chatterji, op. cit., P. 67.

29. CBI. P. 203.

30. S.K.Chatterji, op. cit., P. 67.

Dravidian origin are noticeable in some of the place-names like Nāgirattamaṇḍala, Palāśaṭṭa, Prsthima-pottaka (Pāhārpur C. P. Inscr. of G.E. 157= 478 A.D.)³¹, Suvvūṅga (Tipperā c. p. of Lokanātha)³², Rollavāyikā (Āshrafpur c.p. of Devakhaḍga)³³, Koḍḍāvāra (Tipperā. c. p. of inscr. of Bhavadeva)³⁴ Khedirāvilli, Tivaravilli, Ikkadāsī (Dhullā c. p. of Śrīcandra)³⁵, Śrīpattikeraka, Dollavāyikā (Mainā-matī c. p. no. 1 of Laḍahacandra)³⁶, Vṛhaccattivanā, Kuṇṭīra (Irdā c. p. of Kāmboja Nayapāla)³⁷ Vellāva, Tinnīḍi (Belwā c. p. of Vighrahapāla III)³⁸, Varaipada (Madanpara Grant of Viśvarūpasena)³⁹ Bhāṭapaḍā (Bhāṭerā c. p. of Govinda Keśavadeva)⁴⁰. Besides, words like Paṭṭana (town) and Palli (village), Koṭa (fort) used in the place-names also seem to have been borrowed from Dravidian words Paṭṭi which means "small village" (cf. Tamil Pettei, "suburb"), Palli stands for "agriculture village", "city" (cf. Trichinopoly) and Koṭa for "fort" (cf. Telegu Koṭa, Kanarese Koṭe, Tamil Koṭṭei, "fort"). These are found in the place-names like

31. CBI. P. 54.

32. EI. Vol. XV, P. 306.

33. MASB. Vol. I (1905-7), P. 85.

34. JASB. Vol. XVII, P. 85.

35. IB. P. 349.

36. EBEP. P. 73.

37. EI. Vol. XXII, P. 150.

38. Ibid. Vol. XXIX, P. 9 ff.

39. CBI. P. 317.

40. CPS. P. 159.

Adhapattanamaṇḍala (Belāva c. p. of Bhojavarman)⁴¹,
Śrīpattikeraka (Maināmatī c.ps. of Laḍahacandra)⁴²,
Candragarma-koṭakoṇa (Ghugrāhāṭi c. p. of Samācāradeva)⁴³,
Mahārājapallikā (Jājilpādā c. p. of Gopāla II)⁴⁴, Cūta-
pallikā and Kuraṭapallikā (Bāngarh c. p. grant of Mahīpala I)⁴⁵.

Various commodities used in day-to-day life of the urbanised people are referred to in the epigraphic records. These can not be recognised as of Dravidion origin in their present Sanskrit form, although Indo-Aryan borrowings from the Dravidians are well-known. The Dravidians seem to have used various metals like gold, silver, copper, bronze and lead in making their ornaments, weapons, utensils etc. They knew the use of weapons like spear, scimitor (khadga), axe, bow and arrow. All these weapons find mention in the epigraphic records. The references to 'Khādgi', "swordsmen", in the Mallasārul c. p. of Vijayasena⁴⁶ indicates the use

41. CBI. P. 238.

42. EDEP. PP. 73, 76.

43. EI. Vol. XVIII, P. 74.

44. JAS. Vol. XVII, P. 137.

45. CBI. P. 201.

46. Ibid. P. 88.

of this weapon in ancient Bengal. Ornaments like valaya, keyūra find mention in the epigraphs (cf. Deopārā inscr. of Vijayasena)⁴⁷. The word valaya seems to have been derived from the Dravidian root val-ei meaning 'to bend' metaphorically "to surround"⁴⁸.

Similarly, keyūra meaning "armlet" might have been derived from Dravidian kei, "hand", "arm" and urn "to be used". The use of gold, silver and pearl in making ornaments and for the ornamentation of furniture and buildings as found in the inscriptions (cf. Deopārā inscr.) bears the stamp of an urban culture that was, in all probability, ~~was~~ introduced by the Dravidian speaking people. Among the principal articles, fish is referred to in an epigraph (cf. sa-matsyaḥ, Monghyr c. p. of Devapāla)⁴⁹. In this charter a village along with tanks abounding in fish has been donated to the Brāhmana donee. Agricultural product like ginger might have been the contribution of the pre-Aryans, for the word śrngavera "ginger" occurring in the Jagadishpur c. p.⁵⁰ and Kalāikuri c. p.⁵¹ of the Gupta period (GE. 128 & 120 respectively) seems

47. Ibid. P. 246.

48. Robert Caldwell, op. cit., P. 574.

49. CBI. P. 119.

50. EDEP. P. 61.

51. IHQ. XXIX, P. 12.

to have been derived from Tamil(s)ingi - vera "bulbous root". The word haṭṭa or haṭṭikā occurring in the Dāmodarpur c.p.⁵² (G.E. 128 = A.D. 447) and the Khalimpur c. p. of Dharmapāla⁵³ corresponds to Dravidian haṭṭa. Various arts and crafts referred to in the epigraphs seem to have been of pre-Aryan origin. Crafts like carpentry (cf. Sūtradhāra in Garuda pillar inscr. of Nārāyaṇapāla⁵⁴; Śilpin in Bāṅgaḍh inscr. of Mahapāla-I)⁵⁵, metal-work (cf. Karmakāra in Paśchimbhāg c. p. of Śrīcandra⁵⁶, Suvarṇakāra in Kurkihār Bronze Image Inscr.⁵⁷ of Mahipāla-I Kāṅgsya(kāra) in Bhāṭerā c. p. of Govinda Keśavadeva⁵⁸) and weaving, spinning etc. are said to have been adopted by the Aryans from the Dravidians. Above all, the grandeur of urban life as depicted in the epigraphs (cf. Irdā c. p. of Kāmboja Nayapāla⁵⁹; Deopārā Inscr. of Vijayasena) bears testimony to the urban life of the pre-Aryan people of Bengal.

The antiquity of the important port of Tamralipti, known as Dāmalipti to the Dravidians, and the port Gāṅge,

52. CBI. P. 48.

53. Ibid. P. 100.

54. Ibid. P. 155.

55. Ibid. P. 204.

56. EDEP. P. 67.

57. JBORS. Vol. XXVI, P. 35.

58. CPS. P. 161.

59. EI. XXII, P. 150.

both of which were known to the Greek writers, indicates the beginning of an urban culture much earlier than the Gupta period.

The religious beliefs in Bengal seem to represent an admixture of Aryan and pre-Aryan elements. The Purānic cults centering round deities like Viṣṇu, Śrī, Umā, Maheśvara as well as phallic worship of Śiva⁶⁰, referred to in the epigraphic records may be mentioned in this connection. The words Puṣpa and Pūjā are of Dravidian origin. The practice of worshipping (Pūjā) with flowers (puṣpa) Valicarū - satrapravartana - gavya - dhānya - puṣpa - prāpaṇa in Dāmodar-pur c. p. of 543 A. D.⁶¹ was not known to Vedic Brahmanism mainly based sacrificial rites and rituals.

Pre-Dravidian element : Austric.

The Dravidian elements seem to have formed a layer over and above the Austric stratum in the population of Bengal. It has been suggested by scholars like Przyluski, Levi, Bloch and S. K. Chatterji that the languages of Austro-Asiatic family chiefly dominated Northern and Central India and their

60. CBI, PP. 50, 62, 100, 112 ; EI. XVII, P. 357.

61. Ibid. P. 71.

remnants are still living in Kol, Santali, Khasi and Mon-Khmer groups of the family⁶². Scholars have examined a great many words occurring in Sanskrit language which seem to be loan-words from Austric source⁶³. Many such words have also got entry into modern Indian languages. The linguistic approach adopted by Przyluski and other may be subjected to fresh examination in the light of epigraphic records of Bengal.

The records contain a list of place-names accommodating words of Austric origin, such as gohāla in Samgohāli (Kalāikuri-Sultānpur c. p. of G. E. 120 and Jagadishpur c.p. of G. E. 128)⁶⁴, Vatagohāli and Nitvagohāli (Pāhārpur c. p. of G. E. 159)⁶⁵, Dongā (Damodarpur c.ps. of Kumara-gupta, G. E. 125 and Budhagupta, G. E. 157-176)⁶⁶, gulma in Gulmagandhikā (Jagadishpur c. p. of G. E. 128), lavāṅga in Lavangasika (Damodarpur c. p. of G. E. 224)⁶⁷, sālmala in Salmalavataka (Mallasarul c. p. of Vijayasena)⁶⁸, Mayūrasālmalāgrahāra (Nidhānpur c. p. of Bhāskaravarman, third plate, fist, side)⁶⁹, Kāṇā (edge) in Kaṇāmotikā

62. SI. PP. 52-53.

63. P. C. Bagchi, Pre-Aryan and Pre-Dravidian, Calcutta, 1929.

64. IHQ. XIX, P. 12 ; D. C. Sircar, op. cit., P. 61. EDEP P. 61

65. CBI. P. 54.

66. Ibid. PP. 46, 62.

67. Ibid. P. 72.

68. Ibid. P. 88.

69. CPS. P. 15.

(Tipperah c. p. of Lokanātha)⁷⁰, Udumbara "coloquintida" in Audumbarika (Vappaghoṣavāṭa c. p. of Jayanāga⁷¹), sarṣapa⁷² in Sarṣapayānaka (Vappaghoṣavāṭa c. p. of Jayanāga), Pogāra⁷³ "water channel for raising a sort of obstruction in Pogāra - viṣaya (Paśchimbhāg c. p. of Śrīcandra)⁷⁴, accha in Acchamāgopatha (Śaktipur c. p. of Lakṣmaṇasena)⁷⁵, lau⁷⁶ in Lauhaṇḍā - caturaka (Calcutta Sāhitya Pariṣad c. p. of Viśvarūpasena)⁷⁷, muṇḍa in Khaṇḍa - muṇḍa mukha (Khalimpur c. p. of Dharmapāla)⁷⁸, Namundika (Ibid.), Parkaṭimundā (Dhullā c. p. of Śrīcandra)⁷⁹ and Helāvanamundā (Kamauli grant of Vaidyadeva)⁸⁰, Vaḍā used at the end of a number of place-names like Hattavaḍā (Barrackpore c. p. of Vijayasena)⁸¹, Lengavaḍā, Siravaḍā, Lacchavaḍā (Kamauli grant of Vaidyadeva).

70. EI. XV, P. 301 ff.

71. Ibid. Vol. XVIII, P. 60.

72. Malay Seswai, P. C. Bagchi, op. cit., P. XXI.

73. Mal. & Sant.: Pagar, Ibid. P. XXIX.

74. EDEP. P. 65.

75. EI. Vol. XXI, P. 211.

76. cf. Mal. labu, khmer. lbow, P.C.Bagchi, op. cit., 155.

77. CBI. P. 326.

78. Ibid. P. 99.

79. IB. P. 349.

80. CBI. P. 377.

81. IB. P. 57.

Words referring to the things belonging to the material culture of the Austric people may also be derived from the epigraphic records of Bengal. Dr. S.K.Chatterji has suggested that the Austric speaking people were in the neolithic stage of culture and perhaps in India they learned the use of iron and copper. They introduced a primitive system of agriculture in which a "digging stick", lag, lang or ling (various forms of an old word lak), was used to till the soil. The word lāṅgala⁸² that may be traced in some epigraphs (cf. Lāṅgalajoli in Śaktipur c. p. of Lakṣmanasena)⁸³ seems to be derived from lang or ling. The cultivation of rice was, in all likelihood, introduced by them. They introduced also, as some words belonging to their language would suggest, the cultivation of coconut⁸⁴ (nārikela), plantain (Kadali)⁸⁵, betel-vine (tāmbula)⁸⁶, betel-nut (guvāka), turmeric (haridrā), mustard (sarsapa) and vegetables like brinjal (vāṭiṅgana)⁸⁷, gourd (alābu), pomegranate (ḍālimba), kāmarāṅgā etc.

82. cf. Khmer : ankal, Mal : tengala, P.C.Bagchi, op. cit., P. 79.

83. EI. XXI, P. 211.

84. cf. Sakei, Semang : niyor, P.C.Bagchi, op. cit. XXII.

85. cf. Sakei : Keuli, Ibid., P. 4.

86. cf. Halang : lamlu, Ibid., P. 16.

87. cf. Semang : ting, tiong, Ibid., P. XXVIII.

We find in the epigraphs of Bengal that a village was often donated along with coconut and betel-grove (varaja)⁸⁸ which became the sources of income to the donees⁸⁹. The orchard of pomegranates (dālimba) finds mention in the Govindapur c. p. of Lakṣmanasena as the boundary of the donated land. Seeds of dālimba have been compared to jewels in the verse 23 of the Deopārā praśasti of Vijayasena. In the Mahāsthān Stone Plaque Inscription (3rd Century B.C.) sarṣapa is found to have been distributed among the people in times of emergency (Sasapa dina tiyāyike)⁹⁰. The reference to Alābu-puṣpa (bottle-gourd flower) is found in the Deopārā Inscription of (Vijayasena) which bears similitude to pieces of silver.

The word karpāṣa is derived from the Austric language⁹¹. Seeds of karpāṣa have been compared to pearls in the Deopārā Praśasti of (Vijayasena). Nārikela and guvāka find mention in the Candra and Sena records.

The Austric speaking people gradually reached the stage of food-producing agriculture from the food-gathering

88. Varaja is derived from Austro-Asiatic word balu(alak) = betel, Ibid., P. 15.

89. CBI., PP. 326, 328.

90. Ibid., P. 39.

91. Mal : Rade, Jav : Kapas, P.C.Bagchi, op. cit., P. 23.

hunting stage. The Niṣādas, Bhillas, Kols and Śavaras were hunting people of the Austric group. Vanecaras mentioned in the Khalimpur c. p. of Dharmapāla seem to be the descendants of those primitive people. Terms like vāṇa "arrow", dhanuka "bow", pināka "bow-shaped musical instrument of Śiva", occurring in Sanskrit epigraphs of Bengal are derived from the Austric language⁹².

These primitive people seem to have used modern vessels for maritime business. The words donṅā or dinṅā "wooden-vessel" which are of Austric origin may be considered in this connection. In the Dāmodarpur c.ps. (of Kumāragupta and Budhagupta), the word donṅā, however, stands for a place-name, as it has already been mentioned.

The origin of Bengali numeracy system of Kuḍi (20) is traceable to the Austric source⁹³. The Bengali word paṇa or pon is also associated with the primitive numerical system, for four units of twenty (kuḍi) make one Pan (1 paṇa = 20 x 4 = 80) in computing, for instance, betel-leaves, betel-nuts, fruits etc. The use of pan or pon to mean 80 in Santali also points to the Austric origin

92. Ibid., P. XXI.

93. Ibid., PP. XIII - XVI

of the system⁹⁴. Later, pana was accepted as a Sanskrit word and the Trikāṇḍaśeṣa (III. 3, 206) states that 20 cowries make $\frac{1}{4}$ pana. Pana in Sanskrit has, therefore, the same value as Pan (80) in Sāntālī.

In Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra we find that the royal officials were remunerated by cash payment in Pana currency⁹⁵. Pana is again said to be formed of 20 gaṇḍā or gaṇḍā which means a group of four i.e., tetrad. The word gaṇḍaka in Sanskrit which means a system of counting by 4 and money equal to 4 cowries also originated from the same source of pana. The reference to Gaṇḍaka coin in the Mahasthan Fragmentary Stone Plaque Inscr. suggests that the currency was prevalent in Bengal during the Maurya period. The currency system based on the unit of pana continued till the Pāla period as it is evident from the reference to Dramma in the Mahābodhi Inscr. of Dharmapāla. One Dramma is said to be equivalent to 16 panas in Bhāskarācārya's Līlāvati (Varāṭākanām daśakadvayam yat sā Kākinī tāśca paṇāścatasraḥ | Te soḍaśa dramma ihāvagamya drammaistathā soḍaśabhiśca niṣkaḥ)⁹⁶. It may be derived from the Lilavati

94. Campbell, A Santali-English Dictionary, Vol. II, Pokuria, Manbhum, 1899.

95. AS. Vol. II, BK, V. III, P. 26.

96. CBI. P. 114.

that Kākinī used as a unit of measurement in the Sena records originated from numeration-system of 20 as introduced by the Austric people. Some popular religious beliefs and practices prevalent in Bengal seem to have been derived from the Austric culture. The use of betel-leaf, plantain, turmeric in socio-religious rites may be cited in this connection. The cult of fertility that was later transformed into the worship of Śakti seems to have been contributed by the Austrics to Bengali culture. The prevalence of the worship of the goddess⁹⁷ like Pārvatī, Tārā, Caṇḍī, Śarvāṇī etc. is proved by the sculptures of those deities found in different parts of Bengal. Inscriptional evidence also bears testimony to this fact⁹⁷. The phallic worship seems to have been inherited from the Austric people. The word liṅga, referred to in some inscriptions, is of Austric origin⁹⁸.

From the above analysis of the epigraphic records it appears that in spite of the pre-dominance of Sanskrit as the court-language and also as the language of the educated elite, the words or terms belonging to either Dravidian or Austric families of speeches had to be retained and accommodated within the framework of Samskr̥ta or the

97. cf. Śarvāṇī Image Inscr. of Prābhavati, EI. Vol. XVII, P. 357 ; Pārvatī Image Inscr. of Nārāyaṇapāla, ^{Ibid.} XXXVIII, P. 110.

98. Dāmodarpur c. p. of the time of Budhagupta (476-495 A.D.) CBI. P. 62.

language of the cultured. The process that may be traced in the gradual formation of the Bengali language indicates how the Austric, Dravidian and Indo-Aryan elements formed, by stages, the Bengali people. It has been reasonably observed by Professor Suniti Kumar Chatterjee : "Much of our popular religions, much of our material culture, social and other usages, e.g., the cultivation of rice and some vegetables and fruits, folk arts, our marriage rituals and the like would appear to be legacy from our pre-Aryan ancestors"⁹⁹.

The theory of the non-Aryan origin of the Bengalis is also supported by some literary sources referring to the indigenous tribes of Bengal, viz., Vaṅgas, Puṇḍras, Suhmas or Rāḍhas whom the Aryans tried to bring under their fold. The Aitareya Brāhmaṇa refers to Paṇḍras as Dasyus (Te etendrāḥ Puṇḍrāḥ Śabarāḥ Pulindā Mūtibā ityudantya bahavo Vaiśvāmitrā dasyūnām bhūyishṭhāḥ ||)¹⁰⁰ and the Aitareya Āraṇyaka refers to Vaṅgas in contemptuous terms (Vayāmsi Vaṅgāvagādhascerapādāḥ)¹⁰¹. The Baudhāyana - Dharmasūtra (i.1, 2, 13 - 15) prescribes purificatory rites for a visit to Vaṅga and Puṇḍra among other countries.

99. S.K.Chatterjee, Indo-Aryan and Hindi, Calcutta, 1929, PP. 33 - 34.

100. Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, VII, 18.

101. Aitareya Āraṇyaka, II, 115.

Even the Jaina-Sūtras describe the people of Rāḍha as uncultured and savage. According to the Jaina Ācārāṅga Sūtra, the country of the Rāḍhas was pathless (duccara) and the Jaina ascetics, while wandering through this country, were maltreated by the rude natives. It was perhaps due to the rude (rūḍha) nature of the natives that the country was named Rāḍha. It is thus evident that Bengal remained for a long time outside the pale of Aryan culture and the Aryans regarded the original inhabitants of the country as savage till the process of their cultural conquest was complete. In the Sabhāparvan of the Mahābhārata both the Vaṅgas and Puṇḍras are called pure Kṣatriyas. Elsewhere Karṇa is said to have vanquished the Suhmas, the Puṇḍras and the Vaṅgas. The Rāmāyaṇa includes Vaṅga as a part of Daśaratha's kingdom and the Vaṅgas are said to have matrimonial relations with the wealthy family of Ayodhyā. These accounts of the Epics and some Buddhist texts indicate the gradual expansion of Aryan culture in Bengal. While the Jaina Ācārāṅga-sūtra describes the people of Rāḍha at the time of Mahāvīra as barbarous, the Jaina Prajñāpanā includes Vaṅgas and Lāḍhas in the list of the Aryan people¹⁰². These data suggest that the Aryans had much more intimate knowledge of, and closer contact with, Bengal than in the

102. IA. 1891, P. 375.

days of the Dharmasūtras. Certain legends record the tradition suggesting how the fusion of Aryan and non-Aryan blood occurred. It is said that Ṛṣi Dīrghatamas begot on the queen of the Asura king Bali five sons named Anga, Van̄ga, Suhma, Puṇḍra and Kaliṅga who founded the states named after them. All these significant changes must have been brought about between the ages represented by Baudhāyana's Dharmasūtra and the Mahābhārata, roughly between 5th century B.C. the assumed date of the former and 4th century A.D., the lower limit of the date of the latter. Significantly enough, while the Dharmasutras confine the land of the Aryans to the Upper Ganges, the author of the Mānava Dharmasāstra (C. 200 B.C. - 200 A.D.) extends it from the Western to the Eastern sea, though he labels the Paṇḍrakas as degraded Kṣatriyas and ranks them with the outlanders (Paṇḍrakascaudra - dravidāḥ Kāmbojā Yavanāḥ Śakāḥ | Pārada - Pahlavāścīnāḥ Kirātā Daradāḥ Khasāḥ X. 43, 45). While the Pāli Vinayapiṭaka places the eastern frontier of Āryāvarta at Rajmahal, the Sanskrit version of the Vinayapiṭaka locates it in the Puṇḍra country itself.

That the original inhabitants of Bengal imbibed elements of Aryan culture may be shown by the evidence of inscriptions. An inscription¹⁰³ written in Prākṛt and

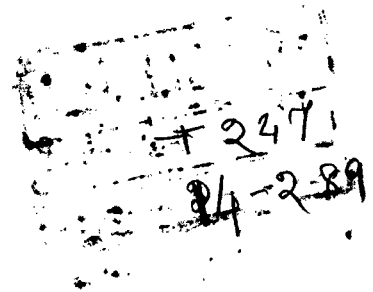
103. Mahāsthān Fragmentary Stone Plaque Inscr., CBI., P. 39.

Brāhmī of about 3rd century B.C. has been discovered at Mahāsthāngarh in Bogra district. The record refers to Sāmvaṅgīyas (or, Ṣaḍvargīyas, or Buddhist sect) dwelling near Puṇḍranagara. The Susuniā Rock Inscr. found near Bankura, West Bengal, written in Sanskrit and Brāhmī character of the 4th century A.D. records the local king Candravarman's devotion to Cakrasvāmin, that is, Viṣṇu. In spite of the expansion of the Brāhmanical culture in Bengal on a wide scale during the Gupta period, the aborigines represented by the Medas, Andhras and Vanecaras survived even as late as the Pāla period.

Remnants of the original inhabitants :

In the Pala epigraphs we find reference to the people like the Medas, Andhras and Caṇḍālas witnessing transactions of land, mostly donations. (Brahmanottaran mahattara - kuṭumbi - Puroga - Medāndhra - Caṇḍāla - Paryantān samājñāpayati, Monghyr c.p. of Devapāla, 11.36 - 37)¹⁰⁴. The expression Caṇḍāla-paryantān seems to signify all the lower castes including the Caṇḍālas. The Medas and the Andhras whose names are associated with that of the Caṇḍālas seem

104. Ibid. P. 119.



to represent some aboriginal tribes. The Medas may be identified with the Arimedas mentioned along with the Bhadrās of Central India in the Brhatsamhitā (Bhadrā-rimedāh)¹⁰⁵.

It would not be unreasonable to assume that the Medas were originally settled in Medapāṭa (i.e., modern Mewar), referred to in the Mount Ābu Inscr.¹⁰⁶ of the Guhila king Samarasimha (v.s. 1342) or that they were connected with the Mers still inhabiting the Aravalli hills region on the boundary of Mevād¹⁰⁷. The people might have given their name to Medāntakampuram which was the capital of Nāgabhaṭa known to us from the Jodhpur Inscr. (of Pratihāra Bauka)¹⁰⁸ (v.s. 894). The city is identified with Merta¹⁰⁹ lying to west of Ajmer in Jodhpur. The Kumāon plates¹¹⁰ of the 8th century A.D. refer to the Meds settled in the Punjab. Again, the Meds along with the Jats are found to have settled in Sindh as early as 7th century A.D. and they are said to

105. Varāhamihira's Brhatsamhitā, Ed. Kern, Ch. XIV., Vs. 2-4.

106. IA. XVI, P. 345-355.

107. IA. VI, P. 191 ; Elliot and Dawson, History of India as told by its historians, Vol. I, P. 523.

108. EI. XVII, P. 95, 1.7.

109. Ibid. P. 94.

110. E.T. Atkinson, Notes on the History of the Himalaya of the N.W.P. India, St. Leonards-on-sea, 1883, ch. III, PP. 43-44.

have been ruled by a Brāhmaṇa dynasty.¹¹¹

The Andhras, along with the Pulindas, appear as a tribe in the Brāhmanical texts¹¹², Epics and Purāṇas. They were the people who belonged to the southern region of India (Dakṣiṇāpathajanmānaḥ)¹¹³. In the Rock Edict XIII of Aśoka¹¹⁴, the Andhras, Palidas etc. have been referred to as those belonging to the bordering states (antesu).

The Andhras seem to have been settled in different parts of the Kṛṣṇā-Godāvarī valley. According to Mr. Srinivasa Aiyangar, the Andhras were originally a Vindhyan tribe whose course of migration was from the west to the east down the valley of the Godāvarī and the Kṛṣṇā¹¹⁵.

111. A Glossary of the tribes and Castes of the Punjab and N.W. Frontier Provinces, Civil & Military Gazette Press, Lahore, 1914.

112. cf. Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, VII. 18.

113. Mbh. XII, 207. 42.

114. Amulyachandra Sen, Aśoka's Edicts, Calcutta, 1956, P. 103.

115. IA. 1913, P. 276 ff. According to Bhandarkar, Andhrapura placed on the Televāha river as depicted by the Serivijayajātaka is identical with the modern Telingiri, IA. 1918, P. 71. Prof. H.C. Raychowdhury identifies Andhrapura with Bezwada, PH AI., PP. 92-93.

The Maiḍāvalu Grant¹¹⁶ of the Pallava king Śivaskandavarman indicates that the Andhrāpatha, the original habitat of the Andhras, embraced the Kṛṣṇā district with Dhānnakaḍa or Bezwaḍā as its capital.

In Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra, the Caṇḍālas are associated with some aboriginal tribes like Śavaras, Pulindas and Vāgurikas (Vāgurika - Śavara - Pulinda - Caṇḍālāranyacarāṇ rakṣeyuh)¹¹⁷ who are described as forest-dwellers.

Descendants of these forest-dwelling aboriginal stocks seem to have been referred to in the expression vanecaraiḥ occurring in the Khalimpur c. p. of Dharmapāla (1.23).

Scholars are divided in their opinions regarding the Austric or the Dravidian origin of the Caṇḍālas. Caṇḍāla is a generic title of the tribe identical with the Mals of Dravidian origin settled in the Rajmahal hills¹¹⁸.

Przyluski's suggestion regarding the Austric origin of the Doms leads us to believe that the Niṣādas, Caṇḍālas etc. mentioned in the Vedic literature¹¹⁹ were of Austric origin

116. EI. VI, P. 243.

117. AS. Vol. I, BK II. I, P. 26.

118. H.H.Risley, The Tribes and Castes in Bengal, Vol. I, Calcutta, 1981, P. 185.

119. N.K. Dutta, The Origin and Growth of Castes in India, Vol. I, Calcutta, 1963, P. 24 fn.

as the Doms are said to be the descendants of the Caṇḍālas. It appears, however, that the Caṇḍālas like the Medas and Andhras belonged to some pre-Aryan aboriginal tribe.

References to such other tribal castes like Haddipās is found in the Bhāṭerā c. p. of Govinda Keśavadeva (12th century A.D.). Haddipās or Haddis, often associated with Caṇḍāla or Domba (Dom) belonged to the menial and scavenger caste of Bengal, "the remnant of a Hinduised aboriginal tribe"¹²⁰.

As suggested by Kauṭilya, the people belonging to the aboriginal tribes were often recruited for reclaiming the forest land and bringing the reclaimed land under cultivation and were regarded as Śūdra (Śūdrakarṣakaprāyaṁ grāmaṁ nivasayet)¹²¹. It is not unreasonable to suggest that the tribal people migrating from one part of the country to another in search of new habitat and occupation came to settle in Bengal. Again, it may also be suggested that the military department of the Pālas recruited menials from among the tribes under consideration to serve in the army.

120. H. H. Risley, op. cit., P. 314.

121. AS. Vol. I, BK. II. I, P. 26.

Foreign elements in the population of Bengal :

The people who had emigrated in Bengal from time to time hailed from different parts of India. Some of them were of foreign origin from Indian point of view, but all of them were foreigners to Bengal.

Śaka element :

Ptolemy in his Geography¹²² refers to a town named Murunḍoi on the eastern bank of the Ganga which was most probably inhabited by the Murunḍas, a branch of the Śakas, also referred to in some Chinese sources. Indian literary tradition (Jaina Prabhvaka - carita) refers to the Murunḍa rule of Pāṭaliputra about the 2nd century A.D.¹²³ The existence of a Murunḍa family in the eastern region of Bengal is proved by the reference to a feudatory chief (Sāmanta)^χ

122. IA. 1884, P. 377.

123. PHAI. P. 483.

Maruṇḍanātha in the Kāhlāpur plate¹²⁴ found in the Sylhet district. In the record Sāmanta Maruṇḍanātha is said to have donated land in favour of god Anantanārāyaṇa. Sten Konow states that Muruṇḍa is a Śaka word meaning 'lord', Sanskrit 'svāmin',¹²⁵. As the Muruṇḍas are believed to be of Scythian origin, their occupation ~~in~~ Bihar and Bengal may be explained by the assumption that they probably began to rule in the capacity of feudatories under the Kuṣāṇa overlord and later asserted their independence in the 3rd century A.D. taking an opportunity of the decline of the Kuṣāṇa power. The Kāhlāpur C. P. seems to suggest that the Muruṇḍa elements lingered on till the 7th century A.D.

Political disintegration after the death of the Gauda king Sasanka invited political aggressions from outside Bengal. It would not be unreasonable to assume that a section of the invader infiltrators ultimately settled in this country and became gradually merged in the population of Bengal.

Sailas :

The advent of Sailas in Bengal is furnished by the Rāgholī C. P. of Jayavardhana¹²⁶, which informs us that

124. CPS. P. 72.

125. PHAI. P. 483.

126. EI. IX, P. 41.

the brother of great-grand-father of Jayavardhana defeated the Paundra king and conquered his dominion (Paundrādhīpam kṣmāpatiṃ hatvaikō viṣayam tameva sakalam jagrāha śauryān-vitah, V.2). According to the record, their original home was in the Valley of the Himalayas, but they conquered Gurjara (Kailāsā-cala-tuṅga-śṛṅga-vipuladrono-jayeśa-prabhuh (read javamśa -) deśam Gurjaramāśasāda, 11. 1-4). Two other branches of the Śailas were settled at Kāśī (Benaras) and in the Vindhyan region.

The Paundra kingdom conquered by the Śailas has been identified with North Bengal, as this region was known as both Pundra and Paundra¹²⁷. The homeland of the Śailas in the Himalayan region as indicated in the Rāgholi C. P. seems to have a bearing upon their nomenclature. We have no evidence to suggest that the Śailas who had settled in North Bengal were ever ousted.

In the Pāla records of Bengal may be traced references to a number of ethnic tribes like Gaudas, Mālavas, Khaśas, Kulikas, Karnātas, Lātas, Coḍas, etc. who appear to be mercenary soldiers recruited in the Pāla army (Gauda -

127. cf. Belāva C. P. of Bhojavarmadeva ; CBI, P. 238.

Mālava - Coḍa - Khaśa - Hūṇa - Kulika - Karnāṭalāṭa ...

sevakādīn, Mānāhali C. P. of Madanapāla, 1. 37)¹²⁸. An

attempt may be made to ascertain their positions, if any, in the population of Bengal.

Gauḍas :

Both literary and epigraphic sources¹²⁹ commonly locate the Gauḍas in Bengal. But as they are represented to have been soldiers recruited in the Pāla army, their original settlement may be sought elsewhere. A.M.T. Jackson has pointed out that the Gauḍas seem to have been connected with Thāneśvar as the place was called Guḍa - Thaneshar in Alberuni's work¹³⁰. Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar also holds that Gauḍa is the name of a tribe, as there are different castes with the appellation of Gauda, namely, Gujar - Gaud (Brahmanas), Gauḍa - Rājput (Kāyasthas) and Gauḍatagas in Rajasthan and Central India. We may also refer to the five divisions of Brāhmaṇas, namely, Sārasvata, Kānyakubja, Gauḍa, Utkala and Maithila¹³¹. Evidently different branches

128. Ibid., P. 215.

129. S.B. Chaudhuri, Ethnic Settlements in Ancient India
Pt. I, Calcutta, 1955, PP. 173-79.

130. JRAS. 1905, PP. 163-64.

131. IHQ. XIII, No. 1 (1937), P. 162.

of Brāhmaṇas derived their respective nomenclatures from the countries where they had been settled. It appears that the Gauḍa tribe came to settle in different parts of India. But the original home of the Gauḍas can hardly be located with certainty. It is due to the growing importance of the Gauḍas in Bengal that the Gauḍas settled in other parts of India were shaded into obscurity. Tradition has it that in early period there were Pañca-Gauḍas, viz. Gauḍa, Mithilā, (North Bihar) Utkala (North Orissa), Kānyakubja (Gangetic Doab) and Sārasvata (East Punjab). Martial occupation of the Gauḍas is known from Somadeva's Yasatilaka-campu (955 A.D.)¹³². The martial character may be ascribed to the Gauḍas inhabiting any one of the Gauḍa countries referred to.

Mālavas :

In literary and epigraphic records, the Mālavas are associated with central, western and north-western parts of India. For the Classical writers' accounts it is known that the Mālavas (Malloi) of the Greeks were settled in the Punjab at the time of Alexander's invasion. From the Punjab they seem to have migrated to Rājputānā. The Mālava

132. B.P. Majumdar, The Socio-economic History of Northern India, Calcutta, 1960, pp. 48-49

occupation of the Nāgar area near Jaipur is upheld by the Nāsik cave Inscr.¹³³ of Uṣavadāta. Coins with legend 'Mālavānām Jayah' have been found at Nāgar, in characters ranging, in Cunnigham's opinion, from C.B.C. 250 - A.D. 250. In the Allahabad Prasasti¹³⁴ of Samudragupta, the Mālavas along with the Ārjunāyanas, Ābhīras, Yaudheyas, Madrakas etc. represent tribal republics on the outskirts of the Gupta Empire. The Mālavas were ultimately settled in the western part of modern Madhya Pradesh with Vidiśā (Bhilsa) and Avantī (Ujjayin) as the two political and cultural centres in the eastern and western parts of ancient Malwā. The Samvat or era used by them was known as the Mālava Samvat which later came to be known as Vikram Samvat. According to the Kāśikā, the Mālavas were amongst the 'Āyūdhajīvi - samghas' (organisations of those living by the profession of arms) mentioned by Pāṇini¹³⁵. The tribal organisation of this warrior class therefore existed even during the pre-Christian era and the military character of the tribe continued to a much later period.

133. EI. VIII, P. 44.

134. SI. I, P. 257E.

135. Pāṇini's Aṣṭādhyāyī, V. 3.117.

Coḍas :

The Coḍas find mention along with the Gauḍas, Mālavas and others only in the Mānāhali C. P. of Madanapāla.

The kingdom of the Coḍas included the modern districts of Trichinopoly and Tanjore and parts of Pudukkattah State. The ancient capital of the Coḍas was Uraiyr (Uragapura). Kāviri - Paṭṭinaṃ on the northern bank of the river Kaverī was their great port, while Kāñci was one of their chief towns¹³⁶. In the R.E. II of Asoka Coḍas and Pāṇḍyas are said to be the peoples of the border kingdoms.

Khasas :

It appears from different sources that the Khasas were the hill - tribes in the Himalayan region. In the Mahābhārata, the Khasa tribe finds mention along with other hill tribes of the Himalayan region (Khasāḥ ekāsanā yarhāḥ pradarā dīrghavenavaḥ, ii. 52. 3-4, cf. vs. 13-14). The Khasas may be connected with Ptolemy's Kasia towards the bending of Imaos to the east above the sources of the

136. B. C. Law, Tribes in Ancient India, Poona, 1943, PP. 186 - 89.

Oxus¹³⁷. It follows from Ptolemy's description that the tribe inhabited the western part of the Himalayan range. But different enquiries go to prove that a wider area was connected with the tribe who might have left their name in Kāsghar, Kashkāra, the Hindukush, Kashmir and extended in the hills from Kashmir to Nepal¹³⁸. The Rājatarāṅginī locates the Khasās in the adjoining regions of Kashmir viz. Rājapurī (south of Kashmir), Lohara (north-west of Rājapurī), Viranāka (on the left bank of the Vitastā) and some other places nearabout. The Khasās figure also in the Buddhist chronicles among the people subdued by Aśoka in the Upper Punjab. In the Manusamhitā, the Khasās are referred to as fallen warrior class (X. 43-44).

Hunas :

The Hunas (White Hunas or Epthalites) were the nomadic tribe of Central Asia who poured into India during the latter half of the 5th century and the first half of

137. Ptolemy's Geography, Mc Crindle's trans., Ed. S.N. Majumdar, Calcutta, 1927, PP. 303.

138. S. B. Chaudhuri, op. cit., P. 128 ; The Bṛhatsamhitā locates the tribe in the north-eastern region.

the 6th century A.D. and played a dominant role in the history of India eclipsing the Gupta power in Northern and Central India. Later, they ceased to be a great power but ruled over one or more principalities. According to the Rājatarāṅginī, the Hūṇa king Mihirakula, being driven out from North and Central India by the joint efforts of Narasimhagupta Bālāditya in the east and Yaśodharman in the west, established his kingdom in Kashmir¹³⁹. Bāṇa's Harṣacarita¹⁴⁰ locates a Hūṇa principality in the 7th century A.D. in Uttarāpatha near the Himalayas. It was probably the kingdom of the Hūṇas which was invaded by Devapāla (hr̥ta-hūṇagarvam)¹⁴¹. The Hūṇas seem to have settled in different parts of Northern and Central India. That the Hūṇas were gradually Hinduised is indicated by the legend (jayatu vṛṣaḥ) and emblem of Śiva (i.e. bull) on the coins¹⁴² of Hūṇa king Mihirakula as well as by the evidence of Māṇḍāsore Inscr. of Yaśodharman in which Mihirakula is

139. D. R. Bhandarkar, "Foreign elements in the Hindu population", Journal of Ancient Indian History, Vol. I (1967-68), P. 298.

140. HAB., P. 113.

141. Bādal Pillor Inscr. of Nārāyanapāla, CBI., P. 153.

142. Smith, Catalogue of the coins in the Indian Museum, Vol. I, Pt. III, Calcutta, P. 236.

said to be a devotee of Siva (Sthānoranyatra yena Praṇati -
krpanatām prāpitām nottamāṅgam, v. 6)¹⁴³. They were, how-
ever, regarded as Ksatriyas in the Manusāṃhitā presumably
in recognition of their long-drawn military activities in
India.

Kulika :

There is hardly any reference to Kulika as a distinct
tribe. Kulika may be connected with the tribe named Kulūtas,
Kolūta or Kolūka referred to in the Epics and the Purāṇas¹⁴⁴.
The country called Kulūta (named after the tribe inhabiting
the land) was known to Hiuen-Tsang¹⁴⁵.

Scholars like Pargiter and Cunnigham identify the land
of Kulūtas with modern Kulu valley¹⁴⁶. Coins of the Kulutas
bearing the legend 'rājñā Kulūtasya Vīrayaśasya¹⁴⁷ have been
assigned to the first - second centuries A.D. The tribe
seems to have represented a tribal republic like the Mālavas.

143. SIIT, P. 3140.

144. Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa, (LVII, 49, Mbh. Karṇaparvan ;
Rāmāyaṇa, Kiṣkindhyā Kāṇḍa, XLII.

145. Watters, On Yuang Chwang, Pt. I. P. 298.

146. B. C. Law, op. cit., P. 90.

147. S.B. Chaudhuri, op. cit., P. 119 fn. 4 ; John Allan,
Catalogue of the coins of Ancient India, London, 1936,
P. C.

Thus, it appears that the tribe occupied the Kulu valley of the Kangra district.

Lāṭas :

The name of the Lāṭas as a people must have been known as early as the beginning of the Christian era and their country. Lāṭa or Lāṭavisaya was well-known till the 7th - 8th centuries A.D. The earliest definite reference to the tribe is made by Ptolemy who describes Larike lying to the east of Indo-Scythia along the sea-coast.¹⁴⁸ According to K.M. Munshi, from about C.A.D. 150 the tract between Kambhāṭa (Cambay) and the Narmadā acquired the name of Lāṭa, which, thereafter, came to include the country south of the Narmadā upto the Damana - gaṅgā. Under the Cālukyas of Anahilavāḍa, the name of Lāṭa was gradually replaced by that of Gurjara-bhūmi¹⁴⁹. Vātsyāyana's Kāmasūtram describes the characteristics of men and women of the tribe but does not furnish any clue to their location. The Lāṭas were known to Rājaśekhara who represents them as preferring Prākṛt to Sanskrit.

148. Ptolemy's Ancient India, op. cit., PP. 38, 152-53.

149. JASB. XVIII, PP. 2-3, PP. 20n., 36.

Karṇāṭas :

The country of the Karṇāṭas is said to have extended from Rāmanātha upto Śrīraṅga. Śrīraṅga is either Śrīraṅgam opposite to Tānjāvur on the other side of the river Kāverī (Tamilnadu) or Śrīraṅgapaṭṭana near Mysore. Rāmanātha seems to be Rāmanātha-puram district or the Rāmanātha¹ Maṭha in the Madurai District or Rāmeśvara Tīrtha near the junction of the rivers the Tunga and the Bhadrā. The reference to Śrīraṅgam and Rāmanātha as a boundary of Karṇāṭa suggests that it is in the Kannada - speaking areas, that is, the region in and around modern Mysore.

The infiltration of the Karṇāṭas in Bengal continued even after the Pāla period till the advent of the Senas who are known as Karṇāṭa - Kṣatriyas. The Deopārā Inscr. of Vijayasena informs us that Sāmantasena, the head-garland of Brahma-kṣatriya (grandfather of Vijayasena) was born in the family of Vīrasena who ruled over the south (Dākṣiṇātya - kṣaun¹ḍirair - Vīrasena - prabhṛtiramita - kīrttima - dbhirbabhuve tasmin - Senānvavāye Brahmakṣatriyāṇāmaja¹ni kulaśīrodāma Sāmantasena, vv. 4-5). The same account is repeated in the Mādhāinagar C. P. of Lakṣmanasena in a slightly modified form. Sāmantasena is said to be the head-garland of the Karṇāṭa - kṣatriyas.

(Vīrasenasya vaṁśe Karnāṭakṣatriyānāmajani kulāśīrōdāma
Sāmantasena, v. 4).¹⁵⁰ The Karnāṭa origin is further
confirmed by the statement in the Deopārā Inscr. that
Sāmantasena 'slaughtered the wicked despoilers of the
fortune of Karnāṭa' in a battle waged in the South
(Durvṛttānāmayamarikulākīrṇa - karnāṭa - lakṣmī - luṇṭakā-
nām kadanamatanottādrgekāṅgavīraḥ || Yasmādadyāpīyavihata -
vasāmāṅgsamedāḥ subhikṣām hr̥ṣyat-paurastyājati na dīśam
dakṣiṇām pretabharttā, v. 8). All these leave little doubt
that the original home of the Sena rulers of Bengal was in
Karnāṭa, i.e., the region in modern Mysore and neighbouring
regions inhabited by Kannada - speaking people and that
they belonged to the Brahma-~~Kṣatriya~~ caste (those who
exchanged their priestly ^{pursuits} for martial ^{ones} pursuits)¹⁵¹.

It is not unlikely that some of the Karnāṭa military
officials taking the advantage of the disintegration of the
Pāla Empire became so powerful as to carve out an indepen-
dent kingdom in Bengal. It has been suggested also that
the Senas might have come to Bengal in the wake of
expeditions undertaken by feudatories of the Western

150. CBI. P. 278.

151. IB. P. 44 & fn. 3, P. 192.

Chālukyas sometime at the end of the 11th century A.D.¹⁵²
The other suggestion is that the Karṇāṭas in Bengal and Bihar were the remnants of Rājendra-chola's army¹⁵³. It is difficult to pronounce the last word on this issue due to lack of sufficient evidence at our disposal. Whatever we learn from the available records seems to suggest that the Karṇāṭas who came to settle in Bengal were soldiers belonging to the Pāla army or that of the Cholas, or Western Chālukyas.

It is difficult to trace the circumstances in which different ethnic elements were accommodated in the Pāla army. One can not rule out the possibility that referring to the recruitment of soldiers from different tribes and peoples living in distant parts of India, the Pāla rulers indirectly attempted to indicate the extent of the vast territory in which their paramountcy had been established. However, it is not at all unlikely that at least some of those tribes migrated, in connection with their military service under the Pālas, to Bengal and settled over there permanently. The migration of the Karṇāṭas, later known

152. HAB, PP. 221-22.

153. R. D. Banerji, Pālas of Bengal, MASB. V (1915), P. 99.

as Senas, to Bengal may be cited as an instance proved by epigraphic records. The amalgamation of different ethnic elements towards the formation of the Bengali people cannot be gainsaid.

Kāambojas :

The advent of the Kāambojas in Bengal at the end of the 10th century is proved by the evidence furnished by the Bāngaḍ Pillar Inscr. of Kuñjaraghaṭāvarṣa¹⁵⁴ and the Irdā C. P. of Kāamboja Nayapāla¹⁵⁵. Scholars are divided in their opinions regarding the origin of the Kāambojas. Kāamboja was the name of a well-known janapada located by the side of Gandhāra as early as 6th century B.C. It was famous for brilliant type of horses (Pañcāladeśa-mārabhya Mlecchāddakṣiṇapūrvataḥ | Kāambojadesāt deveśi Vājirāśi-parāyaṇaḥ v. 24)¹⁵⁶. Horses of the Kāamboja-country are often found mentioned in literature and inscriptions¹⁵⁷. The Kāambojas living in Aśoka's time are mentioned along

154. JRASBL. (N.S.) VII (1911), P. 619 ff.

155. EI. XXII, P. 150 ff.

156. D.C.Sircar, Studies in the Geography of Ancient and Mediaeval India, 1960, P. 93.

157. cf. Kāambojeṣu ca yasya vāji ... v-13, Monghyr c. p. of Devapāla, CBI. P. 117.

with the Yavanas of the Kabul valley and Kandahar where an edict in two versions meant for these two peoples ~~have~~ been discovered. Scholars like B. R. Chatterjee connect the Kāmbojas with Kambuja, modern Cambodia. R. P. Chanda took Kāmboja to mean Tibet and suggest that the Kāmbojas invaded Bengal from there or a neighbouring hilly region¹⁵⁸. The Tibetan chronicle Pag-Sam-John-Zang locates a country called Kampatsa¹⁵⁹ in the upper and the Eastern Lushai Hill tracts lying between Burma and Bengal.

The Tibetan tradittion and the Chronicles of Ladakh inform us about the Tibetan invasions as far as the confluence of the Gaṅgā which might have taken place during the time of Dharmapāla and Devapāla.¹⁶⁰

The Bāṅgaḍ Pillar Inscr. bears testimony to the Kāmboja occupation of Varendrī or North Bengal in the latter half of the 10th century A.D. (reign of Vighraha-pāla-II) Mahīpala-I claims to have recovered his father-land that had been lost owing to its occupation by enemies

158. HAB. P. 198, fn. 305.

159. IHQ. XV, 511. '

160. JBORS. XLI (1975), PP. 136-37.

having no right to it. (Saṅgara Vāhudarpādanadhikṛtavi-plutaṁ rājyamāsādyā pitryaṁ, v. 12)¹⁶¹. As Varendrī is called Janakabhū of the Pālas in the Rāmacarita¹⁶², it had been lost to the Kāmbojas on the eve of Mahīpāla's accession. The Irdā C. P. grant suggests the rule of the Kāmbojas in Vardhamānabhukti, while Tiruvalangādu Plate of Rājendra Chola indicates their rule in Daṇḍabhukti. The advent of the Kāmbojas in Samatāṭa shortly before the beginning of Candra rule is suggested by the verse 7 of the Paśchimbhāg C. P. of Śrīcandra which reads that after having conquered Samatāṭa, Trailokya - candra's soldiers exclaimed, "That prosperous Devaparvata lying on the Kṣīrodā is this city where the visitor has the feeling of astonishment at the wonderful reports about the Kāmbojas" (Kṣīrodāmanu Devaparvata iti Śrīmattadetat Puram yatrā-gantujanasya vismaya-rasaḥ kāmboja - vārttādbhutaḥ...v. 7).
(Kṣīrodāmanu Devaparvata iti Śrīmattadetat Puram yatrā-gantujanasya vismaya-rasaḥ kāmboja - vārttādbhutaḥ...v. 7).

These foreign settlers in Bengal, who according to the ethnologists, were the ancestors of the Koch people (Rājavamśī) of North Bengal¹⁶³, were influenced by the Brāhmanical culture. Both the Irdā C. P. of Nayapāla and

161. CBI., P. 201.

162. RC. Ch. I. 38, P. 26.

163. EDEP., P. 25.

Bāngaḍ pillar Inscr. of Kuñjaraghaṭāvarṣa undoubtedly prove the inclination of the Kāamboja rulers to the Śaiva faith. The Irdā c. p. begins with the salutation to Śiva (Om namah Śivāya, 1.1.). The description of the temples in their capital at Priyaṅgu (vv. 1,2) more convincingly exhibits the flourishing condition to Brāhmanical religion in the Kāamboja realm in Bengal. The Bāngaḍ pillar Inscr. also records the erection of a magnificent temple of Lord Śiva by Gauḍa ruler of the Kāamboja dynasty (Kāambojān-vayajena Gauḍapatinā tenendumaulerayaṁ prāsādo niramāyi Kuñjaraghaṭāvarṣeṇa bhūbhūṣaṇa, 11.2-3).

Varmans :

The Varmans succeeded to the power of the Candras in East Bengal. The Belāva C. P. of Bhojavarman states that the Varmans were descended from a branch of the Yādava family that originally ruled in Simhapura (Varmāṇotigambhīra - nāma - dadhataḥ ślāghyau bhujau vibhrato bhejuh Simhapuraṁ gūhāmiva mṛgendrāṇāṁ Harervāndhavāḥ v. 5)¹⁶⁴. While R. G. Basak is of opinion that Simhapura was the

164. CBI. P. 237.

same as Sihapura in Lālaratta¹⁶⁵. (Rāḍha) and identifies it with Singur in the Hooghly district¹⁶⁶, R. D. Banerji locates Simhapura in the Punjab¹⁶⁷ and D. C. Ganguli suggests its location in Kalinga, that is, Siṅgapuram between Chicacole and Narasannapeta¹⁶⁸. Although there is no such indication in the Belāva c. p. to suggest that Simhapura was the original home of the Varmans and lay outside Bengal¹⁶⁹, we can not rule out the possibility of the Varmans having come to Eastern Bengal from Simhapura in Kalinga in view of the geographical contiguity of Bengal and Orissa.

Burmese element :

An infiltration of some Burmese element, though in a lesser degree, in Eastern Bengal may be suggested on the basis of a single epigraph found in the Maināmatī Hill Range. The Maināmatī C. P. of Raṇavaṅkamalla¹⁷⁰ (1141 Śaka = 1219 A.D.), records a grant of land measuring 20 droṇas

165. Mahāvamsā, VI, P. 35 ff.

166. EI. XII, P. 37 ; JASB. 1910, P. 604.

167. R.D.Banerji, Bāṅglār Itihāsa, Vol. I, P. 275.

168. EI. XII, P. 4.

169. IHQ. XII, P. 608.

170. Ibid. IX (1933), PP. 282- 86.

in a village named Bejakhaṇḍa by an official (Aśvani-vandhika) named Dhaḍi-eva in favour of a Buddhist monastery built in the city of Paṭṭikera. It has been suggested that the nature of the names of the granter, 'Dhaḍi-eva', his father, 'Heḍi-eva' and the writer 'Medinī eva', all apparently belonging to the same family smells of Burmese origin of the family for 'ba' and 'ye-ba' (modified as e-va) seem to be the characteristic feature of Burmese names even to-day.¹⁷¹ The inscription seems to suggest that a respectable family of Burmese origin had close contact with the kingdom of Paṭṭikera sometime in the 13th century A.D.

This finds confirmation in the Burmese chronicle informing us that a healthy intercourse existed between Burma and the kingdom of Paṭṭikera in the 11th - 12th centuries. We are informed that the vast kingdom of the Burmese king Anoratha (1044 - 77 A.D.) of Pagan, who advanced in the West as far as Bengal¹⁷², was bounded by the foreign kingdom of Pateikkara¹⁷³, identified with

171. Ibid. P. 285.

172. Phayre : History of Burma, P. 37.

173. Report, Archaeological Survey of Burma, 1923, P. 31.

Paṭṭikerā, or Paṭṭikeraka in the Tipperāh district as mentioned in the Tripurā-Rājamālā as well as epigraphic records¹⁷⁴. The healthy intercourse between the two neighbouring states developed through matrimonial relations¹⁷⁵ for more than one generation. Members of the respectable family holding ministerial position under Harikāladeva, king of Paṭṭikerā, seem to have been of Burmese origin.

were

The Bengali people ~~was~~ formed by accommodating Pre-Aryan, Pre-Dravidian and Indo-Aryan-elements one after another. Those who were foreign to India and to Bengal were the Śakas, Khasas, Hūnas, Śailas, Kāmbojas, Burmese etc. Bengal did not find it difficult to accommodate any foreign people within the fold of her social structure, as by the early centuries of the Christian era Manu and Yājñavalkya had devised the theory of Varṇasaṃkara to justify the inclusion of any people within the caste-society of India.

174. (a) Maināmatī Grants of Laḍahacandra, EDEP. PP. 73, 76 ;

(b) Maināmatī C. P. of Raṇavaṅkamalla Harikāladeva, IHQ. IX. P. 286 ff.

175. Report, Archaeological Survey of Burma, 1923, P. 32.

Appendix I

Select Place-names occurring in the Inscriptions of
Bengal.

1. Mahāsthān Fragmentary Stone Inscription (3rd century B.C.)
Puḍanagala (town)
2. Susuniā Rock Inscription of Candravarman
Puskarana (administrative head-quarters)
3. Dhanāidaha C.P. Grant of Kumāragupta I (G.E. 113 =
A.D. 432-33)
Khāṁdā(ṭa)pāra (viṣaya or district)
Kṣudraka (village)
4. Kalāikuri Sultānpur C.P. Inscription of Kumāragupta I
(G.E. 120 = A.D. 440)
Dhānyapaṭalikā
Gulmagandhikā
Hastīśīrṣabibhītaki (village)
Purnakauśika (administrative head-quarters)
Sangḥālī (village)
Śṛṅgavera (vīthī, administrative unit)
Vātā (river)
5. Dāmodarpur C.P. Inscription (No. 1) of Kumāragupta I
(G.E. 124 = A.D. 444)
Doṅgā (village)

Koṭivarṣa (viṣaya or district)

Puṇḍravardhana (bhukti or Province)

6. Dāmodarpur C.P. Inscription (No. 2) of Kumārgupta.I

(G.E. 128 = A.D. 448)

Airāvatagorājya

7. Bāigrām C.P. Inscription (G.E. 128 = A.D. 448)

Pañcanagarī (viṣaya or district)

Śrīgohālī (village)

Trvṛta (village)

Bāigrāma (subdivision).

8. Jagadishpur C.P. Inscription (G.E. 128 = A.D. 448)

Gulmagandhikā (village)

Mecikāmra-siddhāyatana

Mūlavastukā (village)

Puṇḍravardhana (bhukti or province)

Pūrṇakauśika (head-quarters of an administrative unit)

San̄gohālī (village)

Śrīngavera (vīthī, an administrative unit).

9. Pāhārpur C.P. Inscription (G.E. 159 = A.D. 479)

Dakṣiṇāmśaka (head-quarters of Vīthī, an administrative unit)

Nāgīraṭṭa (maṇḍala, an administrative unit)

Nitvagohālī (village)

Palāśaṭṭa (subdivision)

Pr̥sthimapottaka (village)

Puṇḍravardhana (bhukti or province)

Vaṭagohāli (village)

10. Dāmodarpur C.P. Inscription (No. 3) of Budhagupta

(G.E. 163 = A.D. 482)

Caṇḍagrāma (village)

Palāśavṛṇḍaka (administrative head-quarters of a village)

Puṇḍravardhana (bhukti or province)

11. Dāmodarpur C.P. Inscription of Budhagupta (A.D.

476-495)

Doṅgā (village)

Koṭivarsa (viṣaya or district)

Puṇḍravardhana (bhukti or province)

12. Nandapur C.P. Inscription (G.E. 169 = A.D. 489)

Ambilāgrāma (village)

Gopālibhoga (village)

Jaṅgoyikā (village)

Khaṭapurāṇa (agrahāra, a village donated to the brahmins)

Nandavīthī (administrative unit)

13. Gunaighar C.P. Inscription of Vainyagupta (G.E. 188 =

A.D. 507)

Cūḍāmani-nauyoga (port)

- Guṇeka (agrahāra, village donated to the brahmins)
Kṛīpura (administrative head- quarters)
Midvvilāla (village)
Nādaḍadaka (village)
Nāgiḍodāka (village)
Naḍaraśrī (port)
Nakhaddārcarika (village)
Pakkavilāla (village)
Praḍāmāra (port)
Udakagrāma (village),
Uttara-maṇḍala (administrative unit)
14. Dāmodarpur C.P. Inscription (G.E. 224 = A.D. 543)
Ardhaṭī (village)
Koṭivaraṣa (viṣaya or district)
Lavaṁgasikā (village)
Paraspatika (village)
Puṇḍravardhana (bhukti or province)
Puraṇavṛndikahari (village)
Sāṭuvaṇāśramaka (village)
Svacchandapāṭaka (village)
15. Faridpur C.P. Inscription of Dharmāditya, regnal
year 3 (6th century A.D.)
Dhruvilāṭi (village)
Himāsenapāṭaka (village)

Śīlakunḍa (village)

Trgarttikā (village)

Vārakamaṇḍala (viṣaya or district)

16. Faridpur C.P. (No. 2) of Dharmāditya (6th century A.D.)

Navyāvakāśikā (administrative head-quarters)

Vārakamaṇḍala (viṣaya or district)

17. Faridpur C.P. (No.3) of Gopacandra (6th century A.D.)

Dhruvilāṭi (agrahāra-village)

Karaṅka (village)

Navyāvakāśikā (administrative head-quarters)

Śīlakunḍa (village)

Vārakamaṇḍala (viṣaya or district)

18. Mallasārul C.P. of Vijayasena, regnal year 3 (6th century A.D.)

Amragarttikā (village)

Ardhakaraka (agrahāra-village)

Godhagrāma (village)

Kapisthavātaka (village)

Khaṇḍajotikā (village)

Koḍḍavīra (agrahāra-village)

Madhuvātaka (village)

Nirvṛtavātaka (village)

Śālmalīvāṭaka (village)

Vakkataka (vīthī, an administrative unit)

Vardhamāna (bhukti or province)

Vaṭavallaka (agrahāra-village)

Vetragarattā (village)

Vindhyapura (village)

19. Ghugrāhāṭi Grant of Samācāradeva (6th century A.D.)

Candragarmakoṭakoṇa (fort town)

Gopendracoraka (village)

Navyāvakāśikā (administrative head-quarters)

Suvarṇavīthī (administrative head-quarters)

Vārakamaṇḍala (viṣaya or district)

Vidyādharaḷoṭikā (village)

Vyāghracoraka (village)

20. Tipperā C.P. Inscription of Sāmanta Lokanātha (6th century A.D.)

Paṅga (village)

Suvvuṅga (visaya or district)

Tāmra-pāthara-khaṇḍa (village)

Vāpikā (village)

21. Kailān C.P. Inscription of Śrīdhāraṇarāta (6th century A.D.)

Advāgaṅgā

Devaparvata (capital)

Guptinātana (district)

Karala (vihāra or monastery)

Karolakeṭa

Khaḍovvālikā

Metōncama

Nausīva

Nāyavidḍika-villa

Nidhānakhaḍova

Paṭalāyikā (district)

Śrīḍaṅkella

Veloṅcama

22. Bappaghoṣavāṭa Grant of Jayanāga (6th century A.D.)

Āmalapautika (village)

Audumbarika (viṣaya or district)

Karṇasuvāna (administrative head-quarters)

Kuṭkuṭa (village)

Sarṣapayāṇa^gka (village)

Vakhaṇṭa-e-Umālika (devakhāṭa)

Vappaghoṣavāṭa (village)

23. Midnāpore C.P. Inscription (No. 1) of the time of

Śaśāṅka (7th century A.D.)

Dandabhukti (provincial unit)

Mahākumbhārapadraka (village)

24. Midnāpore C.P. Inscription (No. 2) of the time of

Śaśāṅka (8th century A.D.)

Daṇḍabhukti (provincial unit)

Ketakapadrikadeśa (village)

Kumbhārapadra (village)

Tāvīrakaraṇa (administrative head-quarters)

25. Nidhānpur C.P. Inscription of Bhāskaravarman (7th century A.D.)

Candrapura (viṣaya or district)

Karṇasuvarṇa (victory camp)

Mayūrasālmāla (agrahāra village)

26. Āshrafpur C.P. (No. 1) of Devakhaḍga (7th century A.D.)

Dronimothikā (village)

Jayakarmāntavāsaka (victory camp)

Peranāṭana (viṣaya or district)

Rollavāyikā (village)

Śiva-hradikā, sogga-vargga
Tisanāda-jāḍatta kaṭaka

27. Āshrafpur C.P. Inscription (No. 2) of Devakhaḍga

Cāṭapṛāpi

Darapāṭaka (village)

Markaṭa-dāsī-pāṭaka (village)

Midikillikā

Śālivardaka

Vvāramugga

28. Tipperā C.P. Inscription of Bhavadeva (7th century

A.D.)

Ekkarakoṭṭa (village)

Koḍḍavāra

Peranātana (viṣaya or district)

Vāhakakhaṇḍa

Veṇḍamatī (vihāra, Buddhist monastery).

29. Khalimpur C.P. Inscription of Dharmapāla, regnal

year 32 (8th century A.D.)

Āmraṣaṇḍikā (maṇḍala, administrative unit)

Dharmāyo-jotikā

Gopippalī (village)

Jenandāyikā (village)

Kālikāśvabhra (village)

Kāṇādvīpikā (sand-band)

Khaṇḍamuṇḍamukha (village)

Koṇṭhiā (stream)

Krauñcaśvabhra (village)

Māḍhāśālmalī (village)

Mahāntaparakāśa (viṣaya or district)

Nalacarmata (village)

Nāmuṇḍikā (village)

Pālitaka (village)

Pinḍāravīṭijotikā (village)

Puṇḍravardhana (bhukti or district)

Rohitāvāṭi (village)

Sthālīkaṭṭa (district)

Śubhasthalī (village)

Uḍragrāma (village)

Vesānikā (ditch)

Vedasavilvikā (village)

Vyāghratatī (maṇḍala, administrative unit)

30. Monghyr C.P. Inscription of Devapāla (9th century

A.D.)

Krmilā (viṣaya or district)

Meṣikā (village)

Śrīnagara (bhukti, provincial unit).

31. Nalandā C.P. Inscription of Devapāla (9th century

A.D.)

Acala (naya, administrative unit)

Ajapura (naya, administrative unit)

Gayā (viṣaya, or district)

Hastigrāma (village)

Kumudasūtra (vīthī, administrative unit)

Manivāṭaka (village)

Nandivanāka (village)

Naṭikā (village)

Pālāmaka (village)

Pilipinkā (naya, administrative unit)

Rājagrha (viṣaya or district)

Srīnagara (bhukti or province)

32. Bādal Pillar Inscription of the time of Nārāyaṇapāla
(9th century A.D.)

Devagrāma (village)

33. Chittagong C.P. Inscription of Kāntideva (9th century
A.D.)

Harikela (maṇḍala, administrative unit)

Vardhamānapura (victory camp)

34. Bhāturīā Grant of Rājyapāla (10th century A.D.)

Madhuśrava (village)

35. Jājilpādā C.P. Inscription of Gopāla.II (10th century
A.D.)

Anandapura (agrahāra or donated village)

Koṣṭhagrha (village)

Kuddālakhāta (viṣaya or district)

Mahārājapallikā (village)

Muktāvastu

Puṇḍravardhana (bhukti or province)

Samatāṭa (geographical division)

Sīhagrāma (village)

Vataparavatikā (victory camp)

36. Bāṅgaḍa C.P. Inscription of Mahīpala-I (10th century A.D.)

Cavaṭi (village)

Cūtapallikā (village)

Gokalikā (maṇḍala, administrative unit)

Koṭivarṣa (viṣaya or district)

Kūraṭapallikā (village)

Puṇḍravardhana (bhukti or province)

37. Belwā C.P. Inscription of Mahīpāla-I, regnal year 5 (10th century A.D.)

Pañcanagarī (viṣaya or district)

Poṣalīgrāma (village)

Puṇḍarikā (maṇḍala, administrative unit)

Saṭṭāpānāyichatra (administrative unit under

Puṇḍarikā maṇḍala)

38. Paschimbhāg C.P. Grant of Śrīcandra, regnal year 5 (10th century A.D.)

Candrapura (viṣaya or district)

Devaparvata (capital city)

Indresvara (port)

Kāligrāma (village)

Kṛṣṇaśikharin (village)

Pogāra (viṣaya or district)

Paṇḍravardhana (bhukti or province)

Sāla-Varendrī

Samatata (geographical division)

Sātalavargga (administrative unit)

Śrīhatta (maṇḍala, administrative unit)

Vaṅgāla (geographical division)

Vedikā

39. Dhullā C.P. Grant of Śrīcandra, regnal year 35, (10th century A.D.)

Durvāpatra (village)

Ikkādāsī (viṣaya or district)

Khedirāvalli (viṣaya or district)

Loṇiyājodāprastara

Mūlapatrā (village)

Parkatīmunḍā (village)

Paundra (bhukti or province)

Tivaravilli (village)

Vallimundā (maṇḍala, administrative unit)

Yolā (maṇḍala, administrative unit)

40. Edilpur C.P. Inscription of Śrīcandra (10th century A.D.)

Kumāratalāka (maṇḍala, administrative unit)

Leliyā (village)

Satatāpādmāvatī (viṣaya or district).

41. Rāmapāla C.P. Grant of Śrīcandra (10th century A.D.)

Nānya (maṇḍala, administrative unit)

Nehakāṣṭhī (village)

Paundra (bhukti or province).

42. Maināmatī C.P. (No. 1) of Laḍahacandra, regnal year 6

(11th century A.D.)

Baleśvaravardhakivoraka (village)

Buddhanandigrāma (village)

Campāvanī (village)

Dhṛtipurahattikā (market place)

Dollavāyikā (village)

Guptīnātana (village)

Jayalambhagrāma (village)

Karavattivoraka (village)

Mahādevagrāma (village)

Oḍagodhānikā (village)

Paundra (bhukti or province)

Phullahadā (village)

Samatata (maṇḍala, administrative unit)

Śrīpattikeraka (town)

Sūpakāraavoraka (village)

Vaggurabhoga (village)

43. Maināmatī C.P. (No. 2) of Laḍahacandra

Brāhmaṇadevavoraka (village)

Kāmsāarakaddapolaka (village)

Paundrabhukti (province)

Peranātana (viṣaya or district)

Samatāṭa (maṇḍala, administrative unit)

Sūravoraka (village)

Vikramapura (victory camp)

44. Maināmatī C.P. (No. 2) of Govindacandra (11th century A.D.)

Peranātana (viṣaya or district)

Paundravardhana (bhukti or province)

Samatāṭa (maṇḍala, administrative unit)

Sāharatalāka (village)

45. Irdā C.P. Inscription of Kāmboja Nayapāla (11th century A.D.)

Dandabhukti - (maṇḍala administrative unit)

Drona

Kaṇṭi

Kuṇṭīra

Priyaṅgu (capital)

Vardhamāna (bhukti or province)

Vṛhaccattivanā (village)

46. Belwā C.P. Inscription of Vigrahapāla.III (11th century A.D.)

(Lo)vanikāma (village)

Phāṇita-vīthī (viṣaya or district)

Puṇḍarika-maṇḍalikā (maṇḍala, administrative unit)

Puṇḍravardhana (bhukti or province)

Tinnidigrāma (village)

Vahedā-grāma (village)

Vellāva-grāma (village)

Vilāspura (victory camp)

47. Āṃgachi C.P. Inscription of Vighrahapāla -III, regnal
year 12 (11th century A.D.)

Brāhmaṇi-grāma (maṇḍala, administrative unit)

Chatragrāma (village)

Haradhāma (victory camp)

Koṭivarṣa (viṣaya or district)

Kroḍaṅcī

Matsyāvāsa

Poṣali-grāma (village)

Puṇḍravardhana (bhukti or province)

Viṣamapura (village)

48. Bongāon C.P. Inscription of Vighrahapāla -III, regnal
year 17 (11th century A.D.)

Hodreya (visaya or district)

Ittāhaka (village)

Kāñcanapura (victory camp)

Kolāñca (village)

Poṣali-grāma (village)

Tīrabhukti (province)

Vosukāvarṭta

49. Rāṃganj C.P. Inscription of Īśvaraghoṣa (11th century A.D.)

Caṇḍavāra

Dhekkari (administrative head-quarters)

Dīgaghāsodika (village)

Gāllitityaka (viṣaya or district)

Piyolla (maṇḍala, administrative unit)

50. Kamauli Grant of Vaidyadeva (11th century A.D.)

Ajhaḍā-cauvola (village)

Bhāvagrāma (village)

Budhipokhiri

Dhravolaṣā (village)

Digdāṇḍidhara (village)

5. Haṃsakoñcī (viṣaya or district)

Helāvana-muṇḍā (village)

Jayāratipola (village)

Kāmarūpa (maṇḍala, administrative unit)

Koltuvaḍongi-naḍajolī

Koṇṭahāḍa

Lacchavaḍā (village)

Leṅgavaḍā (village)

Mandāra (village)

Naḍajolī (village)

Pipā-muṇḍā (village)
Prāggyotiṣa (bhukti or province)
Pūrvadhara kulacāpaḍi (village)
Śāntivaḍā (village)
Śilaguḍi (village)
Singiādhara (village)
Śiravaḍā (village)
Unaipola (village)
Vaḍā (viṣaya or district)
Varendrī (geographical division)
Velāvanī-patānavapala

51. Sāmantasār C.P. Inscription of Harivarman (12th century A.D.)

Mayūra-vidja (viṣaya or district)
Pañcavāsa (maṇḍala, administrative unit)
Paundravardhana (bhukti or province)
Varaparvata (village)

52. Bhuvaneśvar Praśasti of Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva (12th century A.D.)

Bālabalabhī
Siddhala (village)
Srīhastinībhiṭṭabhūmi (village)
Vandyaghātī (village)

53. Belāva C.P. Inscription of Bhojavarmān, regnal
year 5 (12th century A.D.)
Adhapattana (maṇḍala, administrative unit)
Kausāmbī-Aṣṭagacchakhaṇḍala (administrative unit)
Paundra (bhukti or province)
Siddhala (village)
Upyalikā (village)
54. Mānāhali C.P. Grant of Madanapāla, regnal year 8
(12th century A.D.)
Campāhiṭṭi (village)
Halāvartā (maṇḍala, administrative unit)
Koṣṭhagiri (village)
Koṭivarṣa (viṣaya or district)
Paundravardhana (bhukti or province)
Rāmāvatī (victory camp)
55. Barrackpore C.P. Inscription of Vijayasena (12th
century A.D.)
Bhaṭṭavaḍā (village)
Khāḍi (viṣaya or district)
Kāntijoṅga
Paundravardhana (bhukti or province)
Samatata (geographical division)
Tikṣṇahanda
Vikramapura (victory camp)

56. Naihāti C.P. Inscription of Vallālasena, regnal

year 11 (12th century)

Ahuāgaddiā (village)

Ambayillāsāsana (land of Ambayillā)

Jalasothisāsana (land of Jalasothis)

Khāṇḍayillāsāsana (land of Khāṇḍayillā)

Molādonḍīsāsana (land of Molādonḍi)

Nāḍḍināsāsana (administrative unit) (land of Nāḍḍinā)

Nāḍicāsāsana (administrative unit) (land of Nāḍicā)

Singatiā

Surakonāgaddiā

Svalpadakṣinavīthi

Uttararādha (maṇḍala, administrative unit)

Vāllahittāgrāma (village)

Vardhamāna (bhukti or province)

Vikramapura (victory camp)

57. Govindapur C.P. Inscription of Lakṣmaṇasena, regnal

year 2 (12th century A.D.)

Dharmanagara

Leṅghadevīmaṇḍapī

Pāścimakhāṭikā (administrative unit)

Vardhamāna (bhukti or province)

Vetadd^acaturaka (village)

Viddārasāsana (land of Viddāra)

Vikramapura (victory camp)

58. Madhainagar C.P. Inscripton of Lakṣmaṇasena (13th century A.D.)

Cadaspasāpāṭaka (village)

Dāpaniyā-pāṭaka (village)

Gayānagara (village)

Gundī-dāpaniyā (village)

Gundī-sthirāpāṭaka (village)

Kāntāpura-vṛtti (village)

Paundravardhana (bhukti or province)

Varendrī (geographical division)

59. Tarpandighi C.P. Grant of Lakṣmanasena, regnal year 2

(12th century A.D.)

Mollānakhādī (ditch)

Nandiharipākundī

Nicaḍahāra (tank)

Paundravardhana (bhukti or province)

Varendrī (geographical division)

Velahiṣṭi (village)

Vikramapura (victory camp)

60. Sunderban C.P. Grant of Lakṣmaṇasena, regnal year 2

(13th century)

Kāntāllapuracaturaka (administrative unit)

Maṇḍalagrāma (village)

Pāṭikhādī (maṇḍala, administrative unit)

Paundravardhana (bhukti or province)

Vikramapura (victory camp)

61. Anulīa C.P. Grant of Lakṣmaṇasena, regnal year 3
(12th century A.D.)

Jalapillā (village)

Mātharaṇḍiyākhaṇḍakṣetra (village)

Paundravardhana (province)

Śāntigopīśāsana (land of Śāntigopī)

Vikramapur (victory camp)

Vyāghratatī (administrative unit)

62. Śaktipur C.P. Grant of Lakṣmanasena, regnal year 6
(12th century A.D.)

Acchamagopatha

Bhāgadikhaṇḍa (village)

Dakṣiṇavīthī (administrative unit)

Dāmaravaḍā (village)

Kaṅkagrāma (bhukti or province)

Kumārapura-caturaka (administrative unit)

Mālikuṇḍaparīśarabhū (village)

Parajānagopatha

Rāghavahaddapāṭaka (village)

Vāllihitāpāṭaka (village)

Varāhakoṇavāllihitānimāpāṭaka (village)

Vijahārapurapāṭaka (village)

Vikramapura (victory camp)

63. Rakṣākālī Island Plate Inscription of Maḍommanapāla
Śaka Era (A.D. 1196)
Pūrvakhātika
Śrī-dvārahātaka (village)
64. Rājāvādī C.P. Grant of Lakṣmaṇasena (13th century A.D.)
Mādisāhānsa
Paundravardhana (bhukti or province)
65. Maināmatī C.P. Inscription of Raṇavaṅkamalla of
Harikāladeva, regnal year 17 (13th century A.D.)
Paṭṭikera (city)
Vejakhaṇḍa (village)
66. Madhyapādā C.P. Grant of Viśvarūpasena (13th century
A.D.)
Ajikulāpātaka (village)
Baṅgālavādābhū
Deulahastī (village)
Ghagarakattipataka (village)
Jaṅghāla (village)
Jayajāhādā (village)
Kandradvīpa
Lāuhaṇḍācaturaka (administrative unit)
Madhuksīrakavṛtti (administrative unit)
Navasamgrahacaturaka (administrative unit)
Nāvya (geographical division)
Pātilādivika (village)

Pranullībhū (village)

Rāmasiddhipāṭaka (administrative unit)

Urācaturaka (administrative unit)

Varāhakunḍa (village)

Vaṅga (geographical division)

Vikramapura (an administrative unit of that name)

Vinayatilaka (village)

67. Madanapādā C.P. Grant of Viśvarūpasena, regnal year 14

(13th century A.D.)

Aṭhapāgrāma (village)

Kandarpaśaṅkara (village)

Nāraṇḍapa (village)

Paundravardhana (bhukti or province)

Phalgugrāma (victory camp)

Piñjakoṣṭhī (village)

Uñcokoṣṭhī (village)

Vaṅga (geographical division)

Vāryipadāgrāma (village)

Vikramapurabhāga (administrative unit)

Vīrakatthī (village)

68. Edilpur C.P. Grant of Keśavasena (13th century A.D.)

Paundravardhana (bhukti or province)

Śaṅkaragrāma (village)

Satrakādvigrāma (village)

Tālapāṭaka (village)

Vāgulivittagado (village)

Vaṅga (geographical division)

Vikramapurabhāga (administrative unit)

69. Ādāvādi C.P. Inscription of Daśarathadeva, regnal year 3

(13th century A.D.)

Antarvāṭi	(village)
Bāndikhāṇḍā	(")
Bhāṅganiyā	(")
Diṇḍi	(")
Gaṇāgrāma	(")
Karañja	(")
Māhāntiyāḍā	(")
Māntahaṭā	(")
Māsacāṭaka	(")
Mūla	(")
Mūladāva	(")
Navasamkhaha	(")
Nayanāva	(")
Pāli	(")
Pūti	(")
Sehandāyi	(")
Seu	(")
Vaḍāyila	(")
Viṣayipāḍā	(")

70. Mehār C.P. Inscription of Dāmodaradeva, Śaka Era 1156

(A.D. 1234)

Din̄disāya (village)

Kānyamala (village)

Keśarakoṇa (village)

Mehāra (village)

Paralāyi (viṣaya or district)

Paun̄dravardhana (bhukti or province)

Pūrvagrāma (village)

Samatataṁḍala (administrative unit)

Siddhala (village)

Vāyisagrāma-khaṇḍala (administrative unit)

71. Sobhārāmpur C.P. Inscription of Dāmodaradeva, Śaka
Era 1158 (A.D. 1236)

Cchātiharakhaṇḍala (administrative unit)

Midilliviṣaya (district)

Paun̄dravardhana (bhukti or province)

Rājajāṅghālī

Samatataṁḍala (administrative unit)

Sundaraya (village)

Vāṇduragrāma (village)

Vāṇdurajāṅghālī (village)

Yāśyāga (village)

72. Chittāgong C.P. Inscription of Dāmodaradeva (13th century A.D.)

Bāghapokhirā (village)

Kāmanāpīndiyāka (village)

Ketaṅgapālābhīdapallikā (village)

Lambaśāsanabhū (land of Lamba)

Lovanotsavāśramasambadhāvāṭi

Mṛtaccada

Nabrapālyabhū (land of Nabrapālya)

73. Bhāṭerā C.P. Inscription of Govinda Keśavadeva (13th century A.D.)

Ādalakaṇḍhi (village)

Ākhālikula (")

Āmatāli (")

Anvāvi (")

Bhāsanāṭeṅgarī (")

Bhāskarāṭeṅgarī (")

Bhāṭapadā (")

Bhothilahāṭā (")

Bobācchadā (")

Ceṅgaccari (")

Degigāma (")

Dohāliā Ākhālicchadā (")

Gudāvāyi (")

Hattavadā (")

Itākhālā	(village)
Jagāpāntara	(")
Kaivāma	(")
Karagama	(")
Kāṭā-khālā	(")
Kharasonti	
Kaḍḍiyā	
Laṅgajotṭi	
Mahurāpurā	(village)
Maṅganapāvi	(")
Meghāparāka	(")
Mūlikāndhi	(")
Nāḍakutī	(")
Nāṭayāna	(")
Nāṭivasta	
Pamsiro	
Parākoṇā	(village)
Pithāyinagara	(")
Pomphaniyā	(")
Sālācapadā	(")
Sātakopā	(")
Simhadara	(")
Vaḍagrāma	
Vaḍaso	

Varapañcāla

Varuni

Vasendigāma (village)

Venuragrāma (")

Yodātithāka (")

CHAPTER II

Caste-system : Brāhmaṇas

Section I : Classification of the Brāhmaṇas in ancient Bengal

It is difficult to determine the date when Bengal was first brought within the fold of Vedic Brāhmaṇical culture. There is, however, least doubt that with the expansion of Brāhmaṇic settlements under the royal patronage of the Imperial Guptas, the process of Aryanisation, that of consolidation of Vedicism and the Varṇa-system in Bengal, was accelerated in an unprecedented scale.

That the Brāhmaṇic settlement in Bengal was growing in dimension in the 5th century A.D. is evident from the Gupta copper-plate grants discovered in North Bengal. All these grants record the donation of land to the Brāhmaṇas in Varendrī (North Bengal). The epigraphs of later period, dated from the 6th to the 13th century A.D., record the Brāhmaṇic settlements in other janapadas of ancient Bengal, namely, Rāḍha, Vaṅga, Samatāṭa, Harikela etc. comprising western, eastern and southern Bengal.

Immigration of brahmins from Maḡadhadeśa :

The brahmins seem to have mostly migrated to Bengal from outside. The Khalimpur C.P. grant of Dharmapāla records the settlement of Brāhmaṇas in Bengal who emigrated from Lāṭa, i.e., Southern Gujarat¹. Some inscriptions belonging to the Pālas, Varmans and Senas record the immigration of brahmins from Madhyadeśa (Madhyadeśavinirgata²). The Bāṅgaḡa C.P. grant³ of the reign of Mahīpāla- I records the gift of a village to Kṛṣṇāditya-Śarman, grandson of Bhaṭṭaputra Hṛṣikeśa, who was an immigrant from the village of Hastīpada, identified with the village of the same name mentioned in the Kudopāli grant⁴ (11th century A.D.) of the Somavaṃśī king of Kośala (south). In the said record Hastīpāda is located in Madhyadeśa⁵. A village named Hastīgrāma is mentioned in the Kāhlā plate of Sodhadeva⁶ situated in Gorakhpur district of U.P. The village of the same name is further noticed in the Samyuktanikāya (IV , P. 109) and the

1. CBI., P. 100.

2. Ibid., P. 239.

3. Ibid., P. 203.

4. EI., IV, P. 254.

5. VSP. 1341 B.S., P. 25.

6. EI. VII, P. 92

Dīghanikāya (II, P. 123) stating that the Buddha, in course of his journey from Rājagṛha to Kāśiā (Deoria district, U.P.), passed through Hatthigrāma. It is not unlikely that some of these records refer to one and the same place situated in Madhyadeśa.

The Āmgāchi C.P. and Bangāon C.P. of Vigrahapāla - III⁷ refer to the migration of some brahmins from Kroḍaṇca. From the Āmgāchi grant it is known that the donee Khoḍula-deva-śarman, grandson of Padmāvanadeva, migrated from Kroḍaṇca and also from Matsyāvāsa / Kroḍaṇcavinirgata - Matsyāvāsavinirgatāya Cchatrāgrāmavāstavyāya Vedāntavit-Padmāvanapautrāya, 2.39_7. Kroḍaṇca may be placed in ancient Śrāvastī. (Grāmaḥ Krosaṇjanāmāsti Śrāvastyām yatra yajvanām⁸, V. 16), that is, the region round modern Set-Mahet on the borders of the Goṇḍā and Baharaich districts in U.P., in Madhyadeśa. According to N.K. Dikshit, Kroḍaṇca is to be identified with Kolaṇca (modern Kulāca) in the Bogra district and it falls in Śrāvastī which has been located by some scholars in the modern Bogra district that was incorporated within the Gauda-region of ancient Bengal⁹.

7. EI. XV, P. 295ff ; EI. XXIX, P. 48ff.

8. Padmanath Bhattacharya, Kāmarūpaśāsanāvalī, Rangpur Sāhitya Parishat, 1338 B.S., P. 155.

9. VSSP. Pt.XLI, 1341 B.S., PP. 29-36 ; IA. LX. 1931, PP. 14-18.

It is difficult to ascertain whether this was original Kroḍañca where from those brahmins are said to have migrated. The Belāva C.P.¹⁰ of Bhojavarmadeva belonging to the Varman dynasty mentions a gift of land made to Kāma-devaśarman, great grandson of Pitāmbaradevaśarman, who is said to be an immigrant from the Middle country and to have settled in Uttara-Rāḍha. Immigration of Brāhmaṇas from Madhyadeśa to Bengal continued even during the Sena period. In the Barrackpore Grant¹¹ of Vijayasena, Ratnākara-devaśarman of Kāntijoṅga, great grandfather of the donee, was an immigrant from Madhyadeśa. Another instance is furnished by the Rāmgaṇj C.P.¹² of Īśvaraghoṣa referring to Bhaṭṭa-Śrī-Nibboka-śarman, an immigrant from Caṇḍāvāra, that is identified with Chandwar near Etwa in the United Province¹³.

Movements of the Brahmins within Bengal :

Some of the places, mentioned in the inscriptions, of the origin of the Brāhmaṇas cannot be identified with

10. CBI., P. 239.

11. IB., P. 57ff.

12. CBI., P. 363.

13. Tabaqat-i-Nasiri, ed. by Raverty, Calcutta, 1873-97, PP. 470, 742.

any amount of certainty. The Irdā C.P.¹⁴ of Kāmbōja Nayapāla informs us that the donee, Paṇḍita Aśvatthaśarman was born at Droṇa but hailed from Kuṇṭira. None of these places has yet been identified. It is difficult to say whether the brahmins concentrated from outside Bengal or just moved within Bengal from one place to the other. In the Silimpur Stone Inscr.¹⁵ it is said that in the eastern part of the village of Bālagrāma, an ornament of the land of Varendrī, inhabited by the learned Brāhmaṇas, there lived some paṇḍita-families who, being desirous of living apart, moved to a neighbouring place called Siyāmnva. Another instance is furnished by the Keor Viṣṇu Image Inscr.¹⁶ which mentions that a Brāhmaṇa named Vaṅgoka, great-grandson of Sauriśarman, grandson of Pitāmaha and son of Sayoga of the Śaṇḍilya gotra, originally resident of the village of Taṭākā in Varendrī, migrated to Vikramapura Parganā of Vaṅga. If this inscription be assigned to a date later than the Muslim conquest of Nadia, it may be suggested that the Brāhmaṇa might have left his original home for East-Bengal where Hindu rule continued under the Senas for sometime. In the Belāva C.P. of Bhojavarmadeva

14. EI. XXII, P. 150.

15. EI. XIII, PP. 283-295.

16. EI. XVII, PP. 355-56.

we find that a Brāhmaṇa of Siddhala-grāma in Uttara-Rāḍha received the donation of the village Upyalikā belonging to Kauśāmbī Aṣṭāgacchakhaṇḍala in Adhapattanamaṇḍala of Paundravardhana-bhukti in North Bengal by king Bhojavarmadeva. Similarly, Dāmodaradeva (C.A.D. 1243) selected some brahmins from Siddhala for the gift of land in his kingdom in South-east Bengal. He also granted land in South-east Bengal to brahmin donees from Kāṇyamala, Pūrvagrāma, Diṇḍīśa and Keśarakoṇa (i.e. Mehār C.P. of Dāmodaradeva)¹⁷.

Classification of Brāhmaṇas :

The landgrants furnish lists of Brāhmaṇa donees along with their gotras, pravaras and the Vedic sākhās to which they belonged. But the classification is hardly made on the basis of any of the three categories. The Brāhmaṇas were generally classified as Rāḍhīya, Vārendra, Vaidika and Śākadvīpī. Such classification seems to indicate either the region of permanent settlement or the place of the origin of the Brāhmaṇas.

According to the tradition contained in the Kulajis or genealogical texts, these different sections of Bengali brahmins are descended from five Brāhmaṇas imported by king

17. EI. XXVII, P. 182ff.

Ādiśūra from Kānyakubja¹⁸. Some Kulaji texts¹⁹ however, hold that all the Brahmins in Bengal, other than the Saptasatī²⁰, seven hundred Brahmins who went to fight for king Ādiśūra against the king of Kānyakubha, were the descendants of the original five Brāhmaṇas. According to Nirdoṣakula-Pañjika, the five sons of one of the five Brāhmaṇas are said to have been the progenitors of Rādhīya, Vārendra, Pāścātya Vaidika and Dākṣiṇātya-Vaidika sections of Bengali Brāhmaṇas²¹. During the reign of king Vallālasena, the Brāhmaṇas came to be known as Vārendra and Rādhīya on the basis of the places of their settlement and were classified in several grades of honour and distinction (kulīna) according to their personal merits and qualities

18. Bhāratavarṣa, Agrahāyaṇa, 1346 B.S., P. 838.

19. Ibid., P. 844.

20. According to some, Saptasatīs were descendants of Brāhmaṇas living on the bank of the Sarasvatī river who were brought in Bengal by the Andhra king Śūdraka for performing a sacrifice and settled in this country which was till then without Brahmins. According to some others, they were low-caste people but were recognized as Brāhmaṇas by Ādiśūra as a reward for their services. According to a third view, Vallālasena by dint of a boon from the goddess Caṇḍī created seven hundred Brāhmaṇas who came to be known as Saptasatī. Vide HAB., P. 472.

21. Ibid., P. 473.

of head and heart.

Although the historicity of the story of king Adisura, as given in the Kulajis has been doubted by scholars, the classification of the Brāhmaṇas into Rādhiya and Vārendra and their organisation into gāṃis is generally accepted.

Vārendra Brāhmaṇas :

Land-grant charters dated from the 5th century A.D. to the 13th century A.D., record the settlement of the Brāhmaṇas in Varendrī and Rādha. The Dāmodarpur Copper-Plates of the time of Kumāragupta I and Budhagupta (5th - 6th centuries A.D.) and the Baigrām C.P. (128 G.E.: 448 A.D.) record settlements of the Brāhmaṇas in Koṭivarṣaviṣaya²² and Pañcanagarīviṣaya²³ in Pundravardhanabhukti. Both Kotivarṣa and Pañcanagarī have been located in Varendrī region lying near modern Dinajpur and Bogra respectively. Again, the 10th century-copper-plates of the time of Rājyapāla, Gopāla II and Mahīpāla I show the extension of the Brāhmanic settlements in the said region till a comparatively late period. The Bhāturiyā grant of Rājyapāla

22. CBI., PP. 45, 47, 62, 71.

23. Ibid., PP. 50, 59.

records the gift of a village called Madhuśrava by king Rājyapāla in favour of god Vṛṣabhadvaja (Śiva) in addition to other charities to Brāhmaṇas. The village Madhuśrava has been located by Dr. D.C.Sircar and S.P. Lahiri at a distance of twenty miles from Rajshahi town²⁴. The Jājilpādā C.P. of Gopāla-II²⁵ records the gift of two villages to Śrīdharaśarman belonging to the Mādhyandina branch of the Vājasaneyā school. The two villages, Kāṣṭha-gr̥ha and Mahārājapallikā within the jurisdiction of Ānandapura agrahāra in Puṇḍravardhana-bhukti were probably close to the findspot of Jājilpādā village in the Dinajpur district which falls within the region of ancient Varendrī. The Belwā C.P. of Mahīpāla I²⁶ introduces us to Jīvadharadevaśarman, son of Dhīreśvaradevaśarman and grandson of Viṣṇudevaśarman, belonging to Hastidāsa-gotra who was endowed with three localities namely Osinnakaivartavṛtti, Nandisvāmin and Gaṇeśvara. The Bāṅgaḍa C.P. of Mahīpāla I²⁷ records the donation of village Kuraṭapallikā in favour of Brāhmaṇa Bhaṭṭaputra Kṛṣṇādityaśarman, son of Bhaṭṭaputra Madhusūdana, grandson of Ṛṣikeśa, belonging to Parāśara gotra. One of the gifted villages recorded in the Belwā C.P. of Mahīpāla I, Gaṇeśvara in Pañcanagarī-viṣaya within

24. EI. XXXIII, PP. 150-54 ; IHQ. XXXI, PP. 215-31.

25. JAS. XVII, P. 137ff.

26. EI. XXIX, P. 6ff.

27. CBI., PP. 201-203.

Puṇḍravardhanabhukti, and the donated village Kurāṭa-pallikā in Koṭivarṣaviṣaya in the same bhukti, as recorded in the Bāngaḍa C.P. of Mahīpāla I, were lying within Varendrī. For, the identification of Pañcanagari and Koṭivarṣaviṣaya with Pancbibi in Bogra district and the district around Bāngarh (Dinajpur) respectively stands almost beyond doubt.

The existence of Brahmanic settlements in Varendri region is attested by the evidence of the Bādal Pillar Inscr.²⁸ of the time of Nārāyaṇapāla, furnishing us with a genealogy of a brahmin family of Śāṇḍilya gotra which earned good fame in the history of the Pālas for having produced an uninterrupted line of ministers from the time of Dharmapāla down to that of Nārāyaṇapāla. As the findspot (Hara-Gaurī village) is near Bādal in the district of Dinajpur, it is held that the panegyrist eulogised the local family of Varendrī. Again, the Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa²⁹ (11th century A.D.) records grant of village Digaghāsodikā in Piyollamaṇḍala to the Brāhmaṇa Bhaṭṭasrī Nivvokaśarman of Bhārgava-gotra belonging to Yajurvedic branch. The village might have been situated near the findspot Rāmganj in Dinajpur district in Varendrī janapada. The gifted land

28. Ibid. PP. 151-55.

29. Ibid. P. 362.

in the Belwā C.P. of Vīgrahapāla III³⁰ (11th century A.D.) is the village Lovanikāma which was donated to Jayānanda-devaśarman of Bhāradvaja-gotra attached with the Paipplāda branch of the Ātharvaveda. The village was situated in Phāṇita-viṣaya in Puṇḍravardhana, which has been placed on the bank of the Karatoyā river in the neighbourhood of the village of Panitūl or Panitolā³¹. Moreover, the donee is said to have been the resident of Vellāvagrāma, the modern Belwā in Dinajpur. It appears, therefore, that Bellāvagrāma in Varendrī had become already a centre of Brāhmanic settlement before the present charter was issued. Both the Āmḡāchi grant of Vīgrahapāla III (11th century A.D.) and the Mānāhali grant of Maḍanapāla (12th century A.D.) record the gifts of land in Koṭivarṣaviṣaya of Puṇḍravardhana-bhukti³². The first one grants the villages of Viṣamapura and Daṇḍatraheśvara in Brāhmaṇīgrāmamaṇḍala attached to the Koṭivarṣaviṣaya to Brāhmaṇa Khoḍuladevaśarman of Śāṇḍilya gotra belonging to the Kauthuma branch of the Sāmaveda and hailing from Kroḍaṇca and Matsyāvāsa. As it has been already stated, Kroḍaṇca might be identified with Kolaṇca or modern Kuṭāc in Bogra district, a centre of Brāhmanic settlement in

30. EI. XXIX. P. 9ff.

31. Ibid. PP. 6 and 11.

32. Ibid. XV, P. 295ff.; CBI., P. 215-217.

Varendrī. Matsyāvāsa is identified with Matsyāsī, a gāṃī of the Vārendra Brāhmaṇas. The second land-grant, that of Madanapāla, records the grant of village Koṣṭhagiri situated in Halāvarttamāṇḍala in Koṭivarṣaviṣaya of Puṇḍravardhanabhukti to Brāhmaṇa Śrībhūṣaṇa of Śāṇḍilya gotra attached to the Kauthuma branch of the Sāmaveda. The donee is said to be a resident of the village of Campāhiṭṭi, to be identified with Campaṭi gāṃī of the Vārendra Brāhmaṇas.

Copper plate grants of the Sena period also bear testimony to the uninterrupted settlement of the Brāhmaṇas in Varendri region. The Tarpandighi grant³³ of Lakṣmaṇasena (12th century A.D.) expressly records a gift of land to the Brāhmaṇa Śrī Īśvaradevaśarman in the village of Velahiṣṭī in Varendrī of Puṇḍravardhanabhukti. The possibility of the identification of the village Velahiṣṭī with Beluḍi, a gāṃī of the Vārendra Brāhmaṇas, may not be ruled out. The Mādhāinagar grant³⁴ of Lakṣmaṇasena records an endowment of the village of Dāpaniyāpāṭaka in Kāntapura-vṛtti in Varendrī of Puṇḍravardhanabhukti. The donee was Śāntyāgārika Śrī Govēindaśarman of Kauśika gotra attached to the Paippalāda branch of the Atharvaveda.

33. CBI, PP. 298-99.

34. Ibid., P. 281.

It appears from the survey of the land-grant charters of Bengal that the Janapada of Varendrī was the centre of Brāhmanic settlement in the 5th - 6th centuries A.D. and gradually became a stronghold of the Brāhmaṇas by the end of the Sena period. It is quite resonable to hold that the Brāhmaṇas who had been settled for long in Varendrī came to be known as Vārendra Brāhmaṇas.

Evidence of the records found outside Bengal :

That Varendrī formed the land of the Brāhmaṇas is evident from the land-grant charters found outside Bengal. Thus, the Sāṅghāli plate³⁵ of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa Govinda IV (A.D. 933-34) informs us of a Brāhmaṇa named Keśavadīkṣita of Kauśika-gotra who emigrated from Puṇḍravardhana in North Bengal to South India to receive the grant of the village Lohagrāma included in the Rāmapurī-seven hundred circle. He was a student of the Vājasaneyī-branch of the Yajurveda. An inscription of Khottiga (A.D. 967) mentions the installation of some images of Kārttikeya by the Brahmacārīn Gadādhara of Śāṇḍilya-gotra at the village of Kolagala³⁶. Gadādhara is said to have been born in the village of

35. IA. XII, PP. 247-58.

36. EI. XXI, PP. 260-67 ; IHQ. XXXVI, (1960), PP. 196-200.

Tadā and the illuminator of Varendrī (Svargavāsanimit̥tārtham
Tadāgrāmodbhavena tu Sthāpito divyamantreṇa Varendryudyata-
kārīṇā II, V.14). In addition to the reference to Gadādhara,
the same inscription furnishes the ancestry of the panegyrist
Madhusūdana whose ancestors are said to have emigrated from
Takārī in Varendrī (Śrikarmāarakulāhvayadvijavaragrāmāttu
Tarkārīto niṣkramya kramanirmalassamabhavattasminṛṣi (ṣṇ)
ḍitastatputrasprathitah kṣitāvativālastasmādabhūḍ yassutena
Śrī-Madhusūdanākhyakavināśastā praśastikṛtah ||). Rulers
belonging to different dynasties of Orissa are known to have
invited brahmins from different parts of Bengal including
Varendrī. The charter of the 31st year of the reign of
Somavamsī king Mahābhavagupta I, Janamejaya³⁷ (C.A.D. 975-
A.D. 1010) records a gift of land by the king to his Chief
Minister Mahattama Sādhāraṇa, belonging to Bharadvaja-
gotra, attached to the Vājasaneyā Śākha of the Yajurveda.
This brahmin minister was an immigrant from Takārī in
Varendrī. The Silimpur Stone-slab Inscr.³⁸ shows that there
was an important Brāhmanic locality in North Bengal known
by this name. As the Somavamsī rulers of Orissa were proud
of their connection with Bengal, it would be quite in the

37. EI. III, P. 323ff.

38. EI. XIII, PP. 283-95.

fitness of things that they had a special fascination for brahmins from Varendrī. In the Chakradharpur plates³⁹ of Ranabhañja, a Brāhmaṇa named Padmākara from Burulla in the Varendrī-maṇḍala receives the gift of the village Haṣṭileṇḍa. The donee is said to have belonged to Kṛṣṇātreya-gotra of the Chāndogya-Caraṇa and the Kauthumaśākhā of the Sāmaveda. The Tālcher plate of Gayādatuṅgadeva⁴⁰ records the grant of the village Vāmaitalla in Tuṅkeraviṣaya to three brahmins all of whom went from Bengal. The first donee Bhaṭṭaputra Devaśarman of Kāśyapa gotra emigrated from the village Muthāuthā in Varendrī-maṇḍala and the other two donees named Bhaṭṭaputra Vāsudeva of Vātsya-gotra and his son Bhaṭṭaputra Rāmadeva emigrated from Sāvathi which is located in the area around Baigrām in Bogra district of North-Bengal⁴¹. On palaeographic grounds, the inscription may be placed in the 11th century A.D. Another pious Brāhmaṇa named Śrīdhara went from Bengal to Assam at the invitation of its ruler Vaidyadeva, as it is known from the Kamauli grant⁴² of Vaidyadeva which records the grant of land to the aforesaid

39. JBORS. VI. P. 269ff. ; BL. No. 1494.

40. JPASB. (NS). XII(1916). PP. 291-95 ; EI. XXXIV.P. 91ff.

41. EI. XXII. P. 101ff.

42. CBI. P. 377.

Brāhmaṇa in Kāmarūpamaṇḍala situated in Prāgjyotiṣapura-
bhukti. The ancestor of this donee is said to have been
a resident of Bhāvagrāma in Varendrī. Śrīdhara also may
have been a resident of Varendrī.

Rādhiya Brāhmaṇas :

Epigraphic records bear testimony to the settlement
of a large number of Brāhmaṇas in Rādha-janapada covering
the major part of modern West Bengal. The earliest mention
of the Brāhmanic settlement in Rādha is to be found in the
6th Century-records. the Mallasārul C.P.⁴³ of the reign of
Gopacandra and the Vappaghoṣavāta C.P.⁴⁴ of Jayanāga. The
first one records the grant of eight kulyavāpas of land in
village Vetragarttā in the Vakkataka-vīthī belonging to
Vardhamānabhukti. The donee was Vatsasvāmin of Kauṇḍinya-
gotra associated with the Vāhvrca branch of the Rgveda.
Vardhamanabhukti, it may be reasonably identified,
included modern Burdwan district, as Mallasarul, the
findspot of the record is near Galsi, a Police Station in
the said district. Vardhamanabhukti formed an integral
part of Rādha, more specifically Dakṣiṇa-Rādha⁴⁵. The

43. Ibid., P. 88.

44. EI. XVIII, P. 60ff.

45. HAB., P. 13.

Vappaghoṣavāṭa grant of Jayanāga records the grant of village Vappaghoṣavāṭa to a Sāmavedin Brāhmaṇa of the Chāndogya branch named Bhaṭṭa Brahmavīrasvāmin belonging to Kāśyapa-gotra. Vappaghoṣavāṭa may be the modern village of Ghosapādā in the southern part of Nadia district on the east bank of the Bhāgīrathī river or a village in the south-east part of Murshidabad district having people dependent upon cattle-rearing⁴⁶. Next, we come to the Midnapore copper plates of the time of Śaśāṅka. One of the plates records the grant of land to the Brāhmaṇa Śrībhātṭeśvara of Kāśyapa-gotra, attached to the Yajurveda, in the village Mahākumbhārapadraka lying in Daṇḍabhukti,⁴⁷ at present Midnapore district. Another copper-plate records the grant of some land in the village Kumbhārapadraka as distinguished from the place of the same name with the prefix 'mahā' which is here assigned to Ketakapadrikoddeśa⁴⁸. In the latter inscription the donee Dāmyasvāmin is said to have belonged to the Bharadvāja-gotra and the Mādhyandina branch of the Yajurveda. This village was also situated in Tāvīra-adhikaraṇa, probably an administrative headquarters of Daṇḍabhukti. The Irdā C.P.⁴⁹ of Kāmboja

46. B.M.Morrison, Political centres and cultural regions in early Bengal, Tuscon, 1970, P. 31.

47. JRASBL. XI, P. 1ff.

48. Ibid.

49. EI. XXII, P. 150ff.

Nayapāla records the grant of a village named Brhaccatti-
vana situated in Daṇḍabhukti. From the Bhuvaneśvar praśasti⁵⁰
of Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva (11 century A.D.) we come to know of a
village called Siddhala which has been described as the
ornament of Rāḍha (Siddhala eva kevalamalaṅkāroṣṭi
Rāḍhāśrīyaḥ V. 3) and a famous centre of learned brahmins.
Bhatta Bhavadeva, the minister of the Varmans, was born in a
brahmin family of Siddhala. The inscription gives the
genealogy of seven generations of the family upto Bhavadeva
II. The inscription refers to another village named
Bandyaghaṭīya which is said to be one of the gāṁis of the
Rāḍhīya Brāhmaṇas mentioned in the Kulapañjikā⁵¹. The Belāva
C.P.⁵² of Bhojavarmadeva contains the history of another
brahmin family of Siddhala of Sāvarṇa-gotra. It refers to
the donee Śāntyāgārādhikṛta Rāmadeveśarman, a scholar of the
Kāṇva-branch of the Yajurveda, whose ancestors hailed from
Madhyadeśa and settled at Siddhala. The donor of the
Mehār C.P.⁵³ of Dāmodaradeva selected some brahmins from
Siddhala for making gifts of land in south-east Bengal. The
twenty brahmins favoured with the gifts of land were headed
by Kāpaḍi of Sāvarṇa-gotra who received the charter on

50. CBI. P. 350.

51. HAB., P. 480.

52. CBI., P. 239.

53. EI. XXVII, P. 187ff.

behalf of all the donees. In the Belāva C.P. of Bhojavarman, the village is said to be situated in Uttara-Rāḍha (Uttara-Rāḍhāyām Siddhalagrāmīya Pitāmbaradevaśarmanah Śāntyāgā-rādhikṛta Śrī Rāmadevaśarmane, 11. 43-44). The village Siddhala is probably represented by modern Siddhalgrāma, a village under Lalpur Police Station in Birbhum district⁵⁴. The genealogical account of the family of Bhavadeva II as given in the Bhuvaneśvar Praśasti shows that Siddhala rose to prominence as the centre of Brāhmanic settlement earlier than the 11th century A.D.

A large number of inscriptions of the Sena period record the settlement of the Brahmins in Rāḍha-region. The Naihāṭi C.P. of Vallālasena⁵⁵ (12th century A.D.) records the gift of land in the village Vāllahitṭhā (modern Bāluṭiyā) of Vardhamānabhukti to Ovāsudeva-śarman of Bharadvāja-gotra, a student of the Kauthuma-school of the Sāmaveda, son of Lakṣmīdevaśarman. The Govindapur C.P. of Lakṣmanasena⁵⁶ (12th century A.D.) shows that the king donated land situated in the village Viḍḍāraśāsana in Betaḍḍacaturaka of Vardhamānabhukti to a brahmin of Vātsya-gotra belonging to

54. SHAIB. P. 59n

55. CBI. P. 263.

56. Ibid. P. 274.

the Kauthuma śākhā of the Sāmaveda. The donee was an Upādhyāya (teacher) named Vyāsadevaśarman. The Śaktipur C.P.⁵⁷ of Lakṣmaṇasena records the gift of lands to a Brāhmaṇa named Kuvera of Sāṇḍilya-gotra belonging to the Kauthuma branch of the Sāmaveda, in Kumārapuracaturaka in Dakṣiṇavīthī of Uttara-Rādhā in Kaṅkagrāmabhukti. The twenty donees referred to in the Mehār C.P. of Dāmodaradeva (13th century A.D.) went from different villages, viz., Kāṇyamala, Pūrvagrāma, Siddhalagrāma, Diṇḍisā and Keśarakoṇā. Names of these villages, except Kāṇyamala, are included in the list of fifty-six gāmis of the Rādhīya Brāhmaṇas contained in the Kulaji-texts.

Evidence of records found outside Bengal :

The Brāhmaṇas of Rādhā were also invited by the kings outside Bengal. Mahābhavagupta I Janamejaya (C.A.D. 975 - 1010) of the Somavaṁśī dynasty, ruler of Orissa, made the gift of a village Vakratentali in Orissa to Bhaṭṭaputra Jaṭārūpa who belonged to Kauṇḍinya-gotra and Chāndogya-carāṇa. He was an immigrant to Orissa from Rādhāphamvalli-kandara⁵⁸. R.D. Banerji identifies this place with the

57. EI. XXI. P. 211ff.

58. EI. XI, P. 93ff.

village of Phamvalli-kandara in Rāḍha⁵⁹. But Dr. H.C.Ray is inclined to identify it with the modern state of Rāirākhāl⁶⁰. Patronage was extended to brahmins from Rāḍha by kings of the Gaṅga dynasty also in the form of land-grants. The Indian Museum Plate⁶¹ of Mahārāja Devendravarman (A.D. 802) records the gift of a village called Purujvana to Govinda-śarman who is said to have emigrated to Orissa from his native village in Uttara-Rāḍha. He belonged to Vātsyagotra and was a student of the Yajurveda and the Kāṭha-carāṇa. The Mālkāpuram Stone Pillar Inscr.⁶² glorifies the activities of a Śaiva teacher Viśveśvara Śambhu, who emigrated from Pūrvagrāma in Dakṣiṇa-Rāḍha to accept the gift of two villages, namely, Mandara situated in Kandravāṭi in the district of Velivāḍā (lying to the south of the great river Kṛṣṇavenī, i.e. kṛṣṇa) and Velāṅgapuḍi (apparently adjacent to Mandara)⁶³. This donee became the high priest of Golakīmaṭha in Dāhalamaṇḍala.

59. R.D.Banerji, History of Orissa^{Vol. I}, Calcutta, 1930, P. 206ff ;
cf. SHAIB. P. 74n.

60. DHNI. I, P. 397n.

61. EI. XXIII, P. 73ff.

62. JAHRS. IV, PP. 158-162, IC. VII, No.2, PP. 169-70.

63. EDEP. P. 38.

It is known from the plate of Vākpatirāja Muñja⁶⁴ (C. 986 A.D.) that a brahmin named Donaka who received a land-grant in Madhyadesā from the said king was an inhabitant of the village Vilvagavāsa in Dakṣiṇa-Rāḍha and belonged to the Chāndogya-śākhā of the Sāmaveda.

It appears from the epigraphic study that the settlement of the Brahmins in Rāḍha-janapada began sometime in the 6th century A.D. and gradually extended in the following centuries. The main bulk of the Brāhmanic population settled in Rāḍha for a long time formed the community which came to be known as Rāḍhīya Brāhmaṇas.

Vaṅgīya Brāhmaṇas :

Large number of epigraphic records discovered in eastern and south-eastern Bengal testify to the Brāhmanic settlement in Vaṅga and Samatata (i.e. southern, south-eastern and eastern Bengal) from the 6th century A.D. onwards.

The earliest evidence of this settlement is attested by four copper-plates from Faridpur district⁶⁵. These

64. EI. I, P. 62.

65. CBI., PP. 75-77, 80-81, 83-84, EI. XVIII, P. 74ff.

plates are dated in the 6th century A.D. on palaeographic grounds. The Plate no. 1 of Dharmāditya records the gift of three kulyavāpas of land in Dhruvilāṭi to a brahmin named Candrasvāmin of Bharadvāja-gotra belonging to the Vājasaneyā school. The Plate no. 2 of the same king records the gift of some plots of land to a brahmin named Somasvāmin of the Kāṇva-Lauhitya-gotra belonging to the Vājasaneyā school. The donor of this land was also a brahmin named Vāsudevasvāmin. The Plate no. 3 of Gopacandra records the grant of land to Bhaṭṭa Gomidattasvāmin of Kāṇva-Lauhitya-gotra. The fourth one, the Ghugrāhāṭi C.P.⁶⁶ of Samācāradeva records the transfer of a plot of land in the village Vyāghracoraka to Brāhmaṇa Supratīkasvāmin. The village Dhruvilāṭi has been identified by Dr. D.C.Sircar with modern Dhulāt in Faridpur district, about 28 miles to the northwest of the Faridpur town⁶⁷. References to brahmin donors prove the settlement of the brahmins in this part of Vāṅga even before the issue of these charters. The Tipperā C.P.⁶⁸ of Lokanātha furnishes some important information regarding the progress of brahmanisation in the remote forest region of East Bengal. It records the gift of land in Suvvungavisaya to a high brahmin official named

66. EI. XVIII, P. 74ff.

67. SI. Vol. I, P. 352.

68. EI. XV, P. 306ff.

Mahāsāmantā Pradośaśarman who, in his turn, built a temple of Ananta-Nārāyaṇa and settled there more than two hundred brahmins, by allotting to them specified shares of land. Suvvūṅga-viṣaya is assumed to have been situated in the district of Tipperā, the findspot of the land-charter. Settlement of the largest number of brahmins is met with in the Tipperā grant of Lokanātha which may be assigned to the 7th century A.D. The Kailān C.P.⁶⁹ of Śrīdhāraṇarāta of Samatāṭa records the grant of thirteen pāṭakas of land to thirteen learned Brahmins for the performance of Pañca-mahāyajña. The granted lands lay in the viṣaya of Guptinātana under the jurisdiction of the Kumārāmātya of Devaparvata, the capital of Samatāṭa, situated on the bank of the river Kṣīrodā⁷⁰. The land in question is presumed to have been lying somewhere near the findspot of the record, that is, the village Kailān, eighteen miles south-west of Comilla town⁷¹. The Nidhānpur copper-plates⁷² of Bhāskara-varman bear testimony to the settlement of a large number

69. SI. Inscr. Vol. II. PP. 37-40.

70. cf. Paschimbhāg C.P. II. 9-10. EDEP., PP. 64-65 ;
Tippera C.P. of Bhavadeva, II. 41-42, JASL. XVII,
P. 83ff.

71. IHQ. XXII. P. 236.

72. CPS., PP. 11-22.

of Brāhmaṇas in Sylhet district sometime in the middle of the 6th century. The charters record the renewal of the grant of an extensive Brahmottara to two-hundred and five brahmins of fifty-six gotras by king Bhutivarman, great grandfather of Bhāskaravarman. An unpublished copper-plate of Bhavadeva discovered in the Comilla district (assigned to 8th century A.D.) records the grant of land to a brahmin.

The charter was issued from Devaparvata on the bank of river Kṣīrodā in Samatāṭa and the donated land was in Samatāṭa-janapada, comprising modern Comilla and Noakhali districts. All the copper-plate charters of the Candras rulers record land-grants to the brahmins in East Bengal, that covers ancient janapadas of Vaṅga and Samatāṭa. The Dhullā C.P.⁷³ of Śrīcandra (10th century A.D.) records the gift of land in different villages in Paṇḍrabhukti. One of these places Yolamaṇḍala has been identified with the Mānikgañj subdivision in Dacca district and other places probably lay in the vicinity of this place, as all these plots of land were donated to one individual, Śāntivārika Vyāsagaṅgaśarman who belonged to Vārdhakaśika-gotra and was a student of Kāṇva-śākhā of the Śukla Yajurveda. As the Candras ruled over

73. IB. P. 349ff.

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Vaṅga and the district of Dacca fell within the said janapada, the donated lands might be located in Vaṅga. The Rāmapāla C.P.⁷⁴ of Śrīcandra records the land-endowment to the Śāntivārika Pītavāsaguptaśarman of Śāṇḍilya-gotra in Nehakāṣṭhi village belonging to Nāvyamaṇḍala in Paṇḍrabhukti. If this Navyamandala is taken to be identical with Navyamandala comprising Vanga division of Paundravardhanabhukti, as stated in the Madhyapada C.P. Grant⁷⁵ of Viśvarūpasena, the Rāmapāla grant of Śrīcandra may be taken to be an evidence of another Brāhmanic settlement in Vaṅga. The Paśchimbhāg C.P.⁷⁶ of Śrīcandra (10th century A.D.) informs us of a large Brahmanic settlement in Garalā, Pogāra and Candrapura viṣayas belonging to Śrīhaṭṭamaṇḍala in Paṇḍravardhanabhukti with the establishment of the temples of Vaiśvānara, Yogeśvara and Brahmā. The first two blocks of land were allocated for the establishment of these maṭhas and the settlement of the people of various professions catering to the daily needs of the temples. The third one was exclusively allotted in favour of six thousand

74. CBI., P. 225.

75. Ibid., P. 325.

76. EDEP., PP. 66-68.

brahmins, thirty-eight of them being mentioned in the charter. These Brāhmaṇa-donees belonged to various gotras and pravaras and were scholars in different Vedic branches. This copper-plate is foremost among such charters discovered so far indicating the acceleration of Brāhmanic settlement in the Vaṅga region. It is not unreasonable to assume that many of these brahmins were the descendants of those who were granted land in Candrapurī-viṣaya in Śrīhaṭṭamaṇḍala by king Bhutivarman as early as the 6th century A.D. They were the early settlers of Vaṅga and their descendents might be recognised as Vaṅgiya Brāhmaṇas.

The Dāccā Plate⁷⁷ of Kalyāṇacandra (10th century A.D.) and the Maināmatī plates of Laḍahacandra and Govindacandra show further settlement of the Brāhmaṇas in Vaṅga and Samatāṭa. The first one records the land-grant in Khāṭimaṇḍala, which has been located by H.C.Raychaudhuri in the Diamondharbour sub-division of 24-Parganas district on the basis of the evidence furnished by the Sundarban Grant⁷⁸ of Lakṣmaṇasena and the Barrackpore Grant⁷⁹ of Vijayasena. In both the records mention is made of Khāḍi-maṇḍala⁸⁰ as an administrative division in Samatāṭa. The Maināmatī copper-

77. PIHC. XXIII. P. 36ff.

78. CBI., P. 291.

79. IB., P. 57ff.

80. Reference to Samatāṭiyanala (unit of land measurement) in the Barrackpore grant proves the inclusion of Khāḍimaṇḍala in Samatāṭa.

plates⁸¹ of Laḍahacandra (11th century A.D.), record the grant of land in favour of the Brāhmanical deity Laḍaha-Mādhava in Samatāṭa-maṇḍala. It suggests the settlement of some brahmins in the donated land for the maintenance of the temple. Likewise, the Maināmatī plate⁸² of Govindacandra (11th century A.D.) records the land-donation in favour of the god Naṭṭeśvara-bhaṭṭāraka (Śiva) in Peranāṭanaviṣaya in Samatāṭa-maṇḍala.

The Brāhmanical settlement in Vaṅga under the patronage of the Varman rulers may be suggested, if it is held that the kingdom of the Varmans was confined to Eastern Bengal. The Sāmantasāra C.P. Inscr.⁸³ of Harivarman (12th century A.D.) records the gift of land to a Brāhmaṇa donee of Vātsya-gotra attached to the Āśvalāyana-branch of the Ṛgveda, residing in the village Varaparvata situated in Paṇḍravardhanabhukti. The Belāva C.P. of Bhojavarman records the land-grant in the village Upyalikā belonging to Adhapattanamaḍala in Paṇḍravardhanabhukti to the brahmin Śrī Rāma-devaśarman (Śāntāgārādhikṛta) of Sāvarṇa-gotra belonging to the Kāṇva-branch of the Śukla Yajurveda. Although the

81. EDEP., pp. 74, 76.

82. Ibid., p. 80.

83. EI. XXX, p. 258ff.

villages Varaparvata and Upyalikā have not yet been identified with certainty, they seem to have been situated in the Vaṅga-janapada, as both the charters have been discovered in Faridpur and Dacca districts respectively.

The process of brāhmanisation of eastern and southern Bengal continued under the patronage of the Sena and Deva dynasties of Bengal. Both the Barrackpore Grant of Vijaya-sena as well as Sunderban C.P. of Lakṣmaṇasena record land-grants to the Brāhmaṇas in the low land of Khādimaṇḍala in Samatata. The recipient of the grant in the first charter was a R̥gvedic Brāhmaṇa named Udayakaradevaśarman of Vātsya-gotra belonging to the Āśvalāyana branch of the R̥gveda. The recipient of the second grant was Śāntyāgārika (the priest in charge of the room where propitiatory rites are performed) Śrī Kṛṣṇadharadevaśarman belonging to Gārgya-gotra and attached to the Āśvalāyana branch of the R̥gveda. Another instance of the Brāhmanic settlement in the same region is cited by the Rakṣakālī Island Plate⁸⁴ of Maḍommanapāla (12th century A.D.) recording the gift of village Dhāmahithā to Mahārāṇaka Śrī Vāsudevaśarman of Vārdhinasa-gotra belonging to the Kāṇva branch of the Śukla Yajurveda in Purvakhatika which seems to have covered a large part of

84. EI. XXVII, P. 122ff.

the present Western Sundarbans area⁸⁵. The Ānuliā C.P.⁸⁶ of Lakṣmaṇasena (12th century A.D.) records the land donation in the village of Mātharaṇḍiyā in Vyāghrataṭī-maṇḍala included in Paundravardhanabhukti to the Brāhmaṇa Paṇḍita Raghudevaśarman of Kauśika-gotra associated with the Kāṇva school of the Yajurveda. Vyāghrataṭī has been located conjecturally in Nadia district which was in ancient Vaṅga⁸⁷. The copper-plates of Viśvarūpasena and Keśavasena record grant of lands in different sub-divisions in Vaṅga, viz., Vikramapura and Nāvya. The Madanpāḍā C.P.⁸⁸ (13th century A.D.) of Viśvarūpasena and Idilpur C.P.⁸⁹ (13th century A.D.) of Keśavasena record the villages Piñjakāṣṭhī and Tālapaḍāpāṭaka respectively in Vikramapura division of Vaṅga. The donee of the first grant was Śrī Viśvarūpadevaśarman belonging to Vātsya gotra, while the recipient of the second grant was Śrī Īśvaradevaśarman belonging to the same gotra. The Madhyapāḍā C.P. grant⁹⁰ of Viśvarūpasena records land-endowments in different villages included in the Nāvya region of Vaṅga-division in Paundravardhanabhukti.

85. EI. XXVII, P. 121.

86. CBI., P. 306.

87. B.M.Morrison, op.cit., P. 39.

88. CBI., P. 317.

89. Ibid., PP. 337-38.

90. Ibid., P. 338.

Copper-plate charters issued by the rulers of the Deva dynasty records land-grant to the brahmins in Vaṅga-Samatata region. The Mehār C.P. and Sobhārāmpur C.P. of Dāmodaradeva (13th century A.D.) and the Maināmatī C.P. of Vīradharadeva record land-donations in Samatata-maṇḍala⁹¹.

In some cases, the brahmins are found to have migrated from Rādha or Varendrī to Vaṅga and they might have classed themselves as Rādhiya or Vārendra Brāhmaṇas in accordance with the original janapadas they settled in. But the Brāhmanic settlement in this region over a long time was the traditional stronghold of Brāhmanical culture. It would not be unreasonable, therefore, to classify the Brahmins of Vaṅga as Vaṅgiya Brāhmaṇas who are also mentioned in the Chidvilāsa Plate⁹² of Devendravarman (Gaṅga year 397). It records the grant of a village Kandalivāda in favour of Āditya Bhaṭṭa, Yaju Bhaṭṭa, Sendideva Bhaṭṭa and other brahmins who were all Vaṅgajas of Bharadvāja gotra. The reading Vaṅgajebhya has been supported by D.R.Bhandarkar and S. Rao. But, according to Dr. D.C.Sircar, the reading is Vaṁśajebhya and he translates it as "to the descendants of Gojadiksita" (Gojādīkṣitavaṁśajebhyaḥ). But S. Rao translates it as "to the Vaṅgajas who observed Gojā-dīkṣā"

91. EI. XXVII. P. 187ff. ; E.I. XXX P. 184ff. ; EDEP., P. 81.

92. JAHS. II. P. 150ff ; JAS. XVIII, PP. 77-82.

(Gojādīkṣita vaṅgajebhya), a ritual performance prevalent in that region⁹³. It is not unreasonable to accept the reading 'Vaṅga' (ja) in the sense of its specific geographical division, since the other divisions of Bengal like Uttara-Rāḍha find mention in the Indian Museum Plate of Mahārāja Devendravarman⁹⁴ and specific references to Gauḍa, Rāḍha and Vaṅga are met with in the inscriptions of the Somavaṃśī kings (10th century A.D.).

Vaidika Brāhmaṇas :

Vaidika Brāhmaṇas, mentioned in the Kulaji-texts, are sub-divided into two groups, namely, Pāścātya Vaidikas and Dākṣiṇātya Vaidikas. The epithet Pāścātya indicates that they came from the west and, according to the traditions current among them, they are of the Kanauj stock, their ancestors having at the commencement of Mohammedan rule, migrated from the original habitat to Tirhut and subsequently from Tirhut to Bengal⁹⁵. According to the tradition preserved in the Kulaji texts, Śyāmalavarman imported five Brāhmaṇas from Kānyakubja in Śaka 1001 and settled them in Bengal⁹⁶, since the Bengali brahmins were

93. Ibid.

94. EI. XXIII, P. 73ff.

95. J.N.Bhattacharya, Hindu Castes and Sects, Calcutta, 1973, P. 26.

96. HAB. P. 429.

not conversant with Vedic study and sacrifice. According to another version, the Vaidikas settled on the bank of the Saraswatī river, left their homes for safer regions, when they came to know, by their astrological calculation, of the impending invasion of the Yavanas. Some of them came to Bengal and settled in Koṭālipādā under the patronage of king Harivarman. Those Brāhmaṇas, hailing from North India, must have been known as Pāścātya Vaidikas. Another section migrating from Utkala and Draviḍa were probably known as Dākṣiṇātya Brāhmaṇas⁹⁷. The story contained in the Kulaji has most probably been fabricated on the basis of the classification of the Vaidikas into Pāścātyas and Utkalas, as found in Halāyūdhā's Brāhmaṇasarvasva⁹⁸. As some of the most important settlements of this particular class of brahmins are found in the outlying districts of Bengal, bordering on Kalinga and Kāmarūpa, it has been suggested that they were descendants of those brahmins who refused to accept the reforms of Vallālasena and took refuge in regions beyond his jurisdiction. Authors of the Kulajis maintain that Vallālasena excluded them from the social order of his scheme on the ground that they did not come up to the recognised standard of purity of descent. Whatever

97. Ibid. P. 430.

98. BRS. P. XI.

little historical value may be attached to the tradition, it cannot be denied that the Vaidikas formed a community distinguished from the Rādhīyas and Vārendras by the end of the 13th-14th century, when Kulaji texts began to be compiled. Of course, the separate grouping of the Vaidikas can not be inferred from the epigraphic records. In fact, all the Brāhmaṇa donees mentioned in the land-grants are said to have been attached to one or other branch of the Vedas and some of them are said to have been well-versed in more than one Vedic Saṁhitā. It may be held that some of the Brāhmaṇa families who were originally devoted to the Vedic study retained their traditional adherence to the Vedic study even at a later period, when many brahmins deviated from traditional occupation and took to different professions either at the demand of the state or under the stress and strain of the prevailing economic condition.

It would not be unreasonable to suggest, in the light of available epigraphic evidence, that the Brāhmaṇa families coming from Madhyadeśa came to be known as Pāścātya Vaidikas. The Bāṅgaḍa C.P. of Mahīpāla I records the gift of a village to Kṛṣṇādityaśarman hailing from Hastipada which seems to have been situated in Madhyadeśa, as it has been already pointed out. Likewise, the Āmgāchi and Bangāon copper-plates of Vigrahapāla III inform us of the migration of some

brahmins from Kroḍañja, which is placed in Śrāvastī that was within Madhyadeśa. Both the Belāva C.P. of Bhojavarman and the Barrackpore C.P. of Vijayasena record the immigration of Brāhmaṇas named Pitāmvaradevaśarman and Ratnākaradevaśarman respectively from Madhyadeśa, who are said to have been the ancestors of the donees Rāmadevaśarman and Udayakaradevaśarman. Another such instance of migration may be cited from the Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa where the donee Bhaṭṭavāsudeva is said to have immigrated to Bengal from Candāvāra, identified with Chandwar in the United Province.

Dākṣiṇātya Vaidikas :

The settlement of Dākṣiṇātya Brāhmaṇas in Bengal is vouchsafed by the Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla which refers to Lāṭa-dviḥja (a brahmin from Lāṭa country, i.e. South Gujarat) as the worshipper at the temple of Anantanārāyaṇa (1.15). Lāṭa Brāhmaṇas are known to be one of the five branches of South Indian brahmins as referred to in a Tāmil inscription⁹⁹ (dated 1426 A.D.) of king Vīrapratāpa Devarāja of Vijayanagara. According to some scholars, the Uṭkala

99. D.C.Sircar, Śilālekha Tāmraśāsanādīra prasaṅga, Calcutta, 1982, PP. 170-71.

Brāhmaṇas as enumerated by Halāyūdhā in his Brāhmaṇasarvasva appear to be the forefathers of the Dākṣiṇātya Vaidikas.¹⁰⁰ The existence of the Utkala Brāhmaṇas in Bengal may be traced back to the time of Śaśāṅka on the basis of the evidence furnished by the Midnapore C.P. grants. Those grants ascribed to the two feudatories of Śaśāṅka named Sāmanta-mahārāja, Somadatta and Mahāpratihāra Śubhakīrtti, who record donation of villages and lands to two brahmins respectively in Daṇḍabhukti. In view of the Geographical contiguity of Daṇḍabhukti and Utkala the probability of the migration of brahmins to Daṇḍabhukti from Utkala cannot be ruled out. In all likelihood, these brahmin settlers in south-western part of Bengal were known as Utkala Brāhmaṇas. An immigration of brahmins from both Orissa and other parts of the Deccan to this part of Bengal might have mixed them up in a separate community, for which the Utkala Brāhmaṇas came to be included in the Deccan (Dākṣiṇātya) branch of Vaidika Brāhmaṇas in accordance with their distinct mode of recitation of the Vedic text¹⁰¹. The migration of the South Indian Brāhmaṇas to Bengal was quite possible in view of

100. IC. I, P. 505.

101. BRS. P. XI.

close contact between Bengal and South-India during Pāla-Sena period. The Pālas established matrimonial relations with the rulers of South-India.¹⁰² The infiltration of South-Indians like the Karṇāṭas in Bengal is quite reasonable to hold in view of the fact that they were recruited in the Pāla army and also that the Karṇāṭa Kṣatriyas carved out an independent kingdom taking an opportunity of the disintegration of the Pāla empire. Bengal was the victim of invasions from the south by the Cholas and the Chāḷukyas. It was not unlikely that in the trail of such invasions, some South Indian brahmin families made their way to Bengal. Besides, the Sena rulers themselves, being zealous Brāhmanists, might have brought with them the brahmins from the south to officiate as their priests¹⁰³. Further, if the original habitat of the Ambaṣṭha-Vaidya caste of Bengal can be traced in South India where we find the Physician-caste of the same nomenclature, it is quite reasonable to trace the origin of the Dākṣiṇātya Vaidikas of Bengal to South India.

102. D.C.Sircar, Social life in ancient India, Calcutta, 1971, PP. 111-12 ; cf. Monghyr C.P. of Devapāla.

103. Cf. Purohita, Mahāpurohita, CBI, PP. 261, 280, 297.

Śākadvīpī Brāhmaṇas :

The Brāhmaṇas known as Graha-vipras are said to have migrated from Śākadvīpa. Different accounts are contained in different Kulaji texts as to their origin and settlement in Bengal. According to Śākala-dvipikā, a Rādhiya Kulaji, quoted by N. Vasu, the Brāhmaṇas who were decendants of the Śākadvīpī priests migrated first to Madhyadeśa and then to Gauḍa¹⁰⁴. As they were well-versed in the study of the planets, they^{were} known as Gauḍīya Graha-vipra. According to the Kulajis of Nadiā Vaṅgīya Samāja, twelve brahmins living on the bank of the Sarayū river were brought by king Śaśāṅka to Gauḍa in order to cure himself of a disease by offering sacrifices to the planets. The Kulajis of the Vārendra Śākadvīpī Brāhmaṇas repeat the same account¹⁰⁵.

Epigraphic reference to Śākadvīpī Brāhmaṇas is found in the Govindapur Inscription¹⁰⁶ of Gaya district dated Śaka era 1059 (1137 A.D.), where it is stated that the Magas inhabiting Śākadvīpa were brought to India by Śāmba, son of Kṛṣṇa. The legend of Śāmba as recorded in the

104. HAB. P. 475.

105. Ibid.

106. EI. II, P. 333.

inscription is elaborately told in the Purāṇas¹⁰⁷, where it is stated that Śāmba, being afflicted with leprosy, built a Sun-temple at Multan in order to worship Sun-god to get cured of the disease. As the local brahmins refused to officiate as priests at the temple, Śāmba brought the Magas from Śakadvīpa who were experts in Sun-worship¹⁰⁸. The association of the Magas with Sun-worship has also been emphasised by Varāhamihira in his Bṛhatsaṃhitā where it is stated that the Magas held the office of worshippers in the temple of Savitā (Sun-god), while the Bhāgavatas were the worshippers of Viṣṇu (Viṣṇor-Bhāgavatā Magāśca Savituḥ, Ch. 60.19).

The origin of these Maga Brāhmaṇas may be traced to the Iranian class, called 'Magi' who held the cult of fire-worship and sun-worship. They were originally the inhabitants of Śakadvīpa or Seistan, probably comprising the eastern part of ancient Iran, wherefrom they came to India in the wake of the Śaka migration sometime in the first century B.C. The Iranian cult of Mihira-Mithra, being

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107. Cf. Bhaviṣya, Śāmba, Viṣṇu, Varāha Purāṇas, relevant passages quoted by Vasudeva Upadhyaya, The Socio-religious condition of North India, Varanasi, 1964, P.30.
108. Viṣṇu Purāṇa, trans. by H.H.Wilson, London, 1864-70, P. 382.

being combined with the Indian cult of Savitā-Sūrya, flourished in Northern India in the early centuries of the Christian era¹⁰⁹.

The Tantra work Kubjikā-mātā¹¹⁰, dated 7th century A.D., speaks of the settlement of Śākadvīpī Maga Brāhmaṇas in India. They were also known as Bhojaka Brāhmaṇas and adopted the profession of astrologers and came to be known as Graha-vipras. Bāṇa, in his Harṣacarita (Ch. IV), speaks of a Bhojaka (astrologer) and the commentator states that Bhojaka means a Maga¹¹¹. They were again known as Agradānī Brāhmaṇas, as they first accepted the gifts in Śrāddha ceremony (Granthataścārthataścaitat kṛtsnaṁ jānāti yo dvijaḥ | Agrabhuk sa bhavetchrāddhe pūjitaḥ paṅktipāvanaḥ ||)¹¹².

109. Jitendranath Bandyopadhyaya, Pañcopāsanā, Calcutta, 1960, P. 307.

110. Ibid. P. 308.

111. Cf. M.M. Williams, Sanskrit-English Dictionary, Delhi, 1979, Bhojaka means a class of priests or Sun-worshippers supposed to be descended from the Magas by intermarriage with women of the Bhoja race ; astrologer.

112. Bṛhatsaṃhitā, II. 13 : quoted by J. Bandyopadhyaya, Pañcopāsanā, P. 308.

That the Maga Brāhmaṇas were settled in India by the 2nd century A.D. is attested by some foreign accounts. Ptolemy's reference to Brakmanoi Magoi leads us to make this assumption. Hiuen-Tsang in his Si-yu-ki mentions the Sun-temples at Multan which bears an analogy to the Purāṇic account with regard to this temple¹¹³. Al-beruni (10th century A.D.), speaking of Iranian Magian priests in India, states that they were called Magas. They first came to Multan where a grand Sun-temple had been established.

The association of the Magas with the Sun-god is of great significance. The Sun-god is described as the curer of all diseases¹¹⁴. The meaning of the expression 'Magi' means helper, curer or averters of evils. Reasonably, the Magas were known to have adopted the profession of physician. There is a class of brahmins in South Bihar called Śākadvīpīs who are physicians and priests.¹¹⁵

It appears from the epigraphic and archaeological evidence that the Sun-worship was prevalent in Eastern India at least from the Gupta period. The Deo-bārnāk Pillar

113. Watlers, On Yuang Chwang, II, P. 254.

114. Samastarogāṇām hartā, JASB. XXVI, P. 147.

115. Vasudeva Upadhyaya, op. cit, P. 31n.

Inscr. of the Later Gupta king Jīvitagupta II records the gift of village Vāruṇikā or Kiśoravāṭaka in favour of Sun-god (Varuṇasvāmin)¹¹⁶. This grant along with the Govindapur Inscr. (1059 Śaka era=A.D. 1137) tends to show that Magadha was inhabited by the Magas after whom the country (Magadha) seems to have been named. In a Sun-Image Inscr. found in Dinajpur (North Bengal) the Sun-god is described as curer of all diseases¹¹⁷. The close association of the Magas with the Sun-god is attested by an image of Sun, preserved in Vārendra Research Society Museum, with the figure of a priest wearing high-boot resembling the characteristic costumes of the Śakas. The Kulkudī Sun-god Image Inscr.¹¹⁸ of Govindacandra and the Gayā Temple Inscr.¹¹⁹ of Nayapāla's 15th regnal year, which begin with an invocation to Mārtaṇḍa, (Sun-god) bear testimony to the sun-worship in Bengal in early medieval period. Although there is no explicit mention of Śākadvīpī Brāhmaṇas in Bengal epigraphs, their existence may be derived ^{from} the discovery in Bengal of a large number of Sun-images meant for worship. A stray reference to 'gaṇaka' (astrologer) in

116. J.N.Bandyopadhyaya, Op. cit., P. 313.

117. JASB. XXVI, P. 147.

118. EI. XXVI, P. 24.

119. EI. XXXVII, P. 88.

the Paśchimbhāg C.P. of Śrīcandra clearly suggests the existence of the Grahavipra class of brahmins in Eastern Bengal during Candra rule in Vaṅga.

In the Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa Śākadvīpī Brāhmaṇas are described as Devala Brāhmaṇas who are said to have hailed from Śākadvīpa. According to the Varna-saṁkara theory of the Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa, Grahavipras or Gaṇakas are the offsprings of Śākadvīpī Brāhmaṇa father and Vaiśya mother. It appears from the account of the Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa and later Nivandhas that those brahmins were relegated to a degraded (Patita) position in the social hierarchy of Bengal.

Section II

Position of the Brāhmaṇas in the society

In the edifice of the four-fold fabric of the varṇa-system, the Brāhmaṇas occupy the most prestigious and privileged position. Their ascendancy was due to high birth, noble profession and traditional devotion to the Vedic cult that formed the foundation of the Indian culture. In the Dharmasūtras and the Arthaśāstra of Kauṭilya are enumerated the duties of the Bhrāhmaṇas as adhyayana (study),

adhyāpāna (teaching), yajana (worshipping), yājana (officialiating at worship), dāna (making gifts) and Pratigraha (accepting gifts). These are more or less stereotyped in the Dharmaśāstras which reflect the spirit of the Vedic texts in assigning the highest status and dignity to the Brāhmaṇas. In the Manusmṛhitā, for instance, the highest supremacy in every respect is claimed for a Brāhmaṇa. The most honourable position of the Brāhmaṇas is clearly reflected in the passage of the Puruṣasūkta of the Ṛgveda which indicates the origin of the four varṇas from different parts of the body of Puruṣa (Brahman, the Creator). The Brāhmaṇa is said to have been sprung from the mouth of Brahman Brāhmaṇosya mukhamāśīdvāhu Rājanyaḥ kṛtaḥ, Uru tadasya yadvaiśyaḥ padbhyām Śūdro ajāyata RV. X. 90. 12⁷¹

It is evident from the land grant charters discovered so far in Bengal and its adjacent areas that the Brāhmaṇas continued to enjoy the most privileged position in the society in Eastern India till at least the end of the 12th century. Land was donated to the Brāhmaṇas by the kings of Bengal following the injunctions of the Smṛtis which

1. Ṛgveda Samhitā, Vol. VI, Ed. by F. Max Müller, London, 1874, p. 248.

recommend donation of land to the Brahmanas as a sacred duty on the part of the king ṣaṣṭim varṣasahasrāṇi svarge modati bhūmidah².

Brāhmaṇas as sacrificers :

Epigraphic records of Bengal show that a plot of land or a village was often donated or sold to the Brāhmaṇas for the performance of Vedic rites like Pañca mahayajña³ (i.e. deva - yajña, pitṛyayajña, nṛyajña, bhūtayajña, Brahmayajña) or for the provision of Bali, Caru and Sattrā⁴. It is for their active role in yājana and yajana that the Brāhmaṇas were known as priests, Yājñika or Rtvik. It was the privilege of a Brahmana alone to officiate as a priest. Jaiminī states that as the Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas cannot officiate as priest, the sattrā (a sacrifice extending over many days or years) can be performed only by Brāhmaṇas Brāhmaṇānām vetarayorārt-vijyābhāvāt. Jaimini, V 1.6.18⁵. They also played a vital

2. Faridpur C.P. of Dharmāditya, CBI., P. 81.

3. Dāmodarpur C.P. of Gupta year 128 (448 A.D.), Ibid., P. 47.

4. Tipperā C.P. of Lokanātha, EI. XV, P. 306ff.

5. HD., P. 109, f.n. 230.

role in performing sacraments on various occasions in domestic life commonly known as Ḍaśasaṁskāra prescribed by the Gr̥hyasūtras. In some epigraphic records reference has been made to Brahmin sacrificers, as Yājñika, Ṛtvik⁶ and sometimes they are described as Śrutikratupriya⁷ or Koṭihomaṅgataṅvān⁸. A graphic description of the Vedic mantras by the Brahmins is found in the Gayā Stone Insce. of Nayapāladeva ∠ Vedābhyāsapārāyaṇa - dvijagaṇodgīrṇogra - pāṭha - kramāduccairuccarita - dhvanivyatikarairyatnā - vadhārya girah Kiñcājasrita - homa - dhūma - paṭala - dhvāntāvṛtau sāmpratam ... V.3⁹. Regular performance of Vedic sacrifices is indicated by the comparison of the sacrificial smoke with the mass of cloud in the Irdā C.P. of Kāṁboja Nayapāla ∠ Yasyāṁ homāgnidhūmaughah karoti gaganod-gataḥ Ma (kha) - hūta - sunāsīra - vāhanambhoda - vibhramam V. 2¹⁰. Vedic sacrifices were performed at a large scale by the Brahmin sages in the hermitages on the

6. Jājilpādā Grant of Gopāla II, JAS. XVII, P. 137ff.

Irdā C.P. of Kāṁboja Nayapāla, EI. XXII, P. 150ff.

7. Madanpur C.P. of Śrīcandra, EI. XXVIII, P. 51.

8. Rāmpāla C.P. of Śrīcandra, CBI., P. 225.

9. CBI., P. 142.

10. EI. XXII, P. 150.

bank of the Ganga Udgandhīnyājyadhūmairmṛgaśisūrasitā -
khinnavaikhānasāstrī - stanyakṣīrāṇi - Kiraprakaraparici-
tabrahmapārāyaṇāni Wenāsevyanta śeṣe vayasi bhavabhayā -
skandibhirmaskarīndraiḥ pūrṇotsaṅgāni Gaṅgāpulinaparisarā-
raṇya - puṇyāśramāṇi V. 9 ¹¹. The Brahmins followed a
specific branch (śākhā) of the Vedic Saṁhitās in conducting
Svādhyāya and sacrifices. It was customary in the land-
grant charters to put on record the particular Vedic school
(śākhā) to which belonged the Brāhmaṇa donee. Thus, the
epigraphic records of Bengal since the Gupta period mention
different Vedic schools, namely, Kāṇva, Mādhyandina branches
of the Śukla yajurveda (Vājasaneyā), Taittirīya and Cārakya
branches of Kṛṣṇa - Yajurveda, Āśvalāyana and Vāhvṛca
branches of the Ṛgveda, Kauthuma branch of the Sāmaveda and
Paippalāda branch of the Atharvaveda. The Nidhānpur C.P.s ¹²
of Bhāskaravarman mention more than two hundred Brahmins
belonging to various such schools already mentioned above.
It appears from the said record that the settlement of the
large number of Brahmins in Mayūrasālmalāgrahāra began
from the time of Bhūti-varman, great - grandfather of
Bhāskaravarman. The widespread practice of the Vedic cult

11. CBI., P. 142.

12. CPS., PP. 14-21.

from 5th century A.D., therefore, disproves the Ādiśūra-legend which describes the importation of five brahmins from Kānyakubja in Bengal by king Ādiśūra some time between 8th and 10th century A.D.¹³ in order to arrange for the performance of the Vedic sacrifices, since there was ^{no} dearth in Bengal of the brahmins expert in the Vedas. But what little historiocity may be attached to this legend, it cannot be denied that the legend corroborates the epigraphic evidences as regards the continuity of the age-old tradition of the Vedic sacrificial cult in Bengal by the efforts of the brahmins till late date.

Brāhmaṇas as teachers :

Not only as sacrificers, but also as teachers, the brahmins played their part in the society of ancient Bengal. Imparting instructions on Śruti and Smṛti was the sole charge of the brahmins according to the Dharmaśāstras. It was the responsibility of the Brāhmaṇa teachers to get the students initiated as a Brahmacārin through the Upanayana ceremony and impart him education until the Samāvartana ceremony, when the Snātaka title was conferred on the student by the teacher on completion of the study. Though, very often, the Brāhmaṇas had knowledge of more than one Vedic Saṁhitā, they specialized in a particular branch of

13. Bhāratavarṣa, 1346 B.S. Āṣāḍha - Agrahāyaṇa, P. 357ff.

the Vedic literature, such as Vedāṅga, or Vedānta in which they might have gained more proficiency than others. In addition to the Vedic studies, the brahmins in Bengal are said to have been experts in other branches of learning viz. Mīmāṃsā, Vyākaraṇa, Tarka, Smṛti and the like

[Mīmāṃsā - vyākaraṇa - tarkavidyā - vide,¹⁴ or Mīmāṃsā - vyākaraṇa - tarka - vedavedine¹⁵]. Epigraphic records of Bengal from the 10th century onwards refer to Upādhyāya or Ācārya which indicates the existence of the teachers' community at that time. In the Paśchimbhāg C.P. of Śrīcandra mention is made of a Upādhyāya in Cāndravyākaraṇa, who was attached to the Maṭha of Brahmā in Sylhet-region and was allotted 10 pāṭakas of land. The same inscription records grant of 10 pāṭakas of land to each of the eight brahmin teachers of the four Vedas, who were attached to the two groups of four maṭhas, i.e., four Vaṅgāla maṭhas and four Deśāntariya maṭhas of the gods Vaiśvā-nara, Yogeśvara, Jaiminī and Mahākāla. In the Āṅgāchi C. P.¹⁶ of Vigrahapāla III, Brāhmaṇa donee Khoḍuladevaśarman is said to be the descendant of Mahopādhyāya Arkadeva. In the

14. cf. Bāṅgaḍa C.P. of Mahīpāla I, CBI. P. 203.

15. cf. Irdā C.P. of Kāmbhoja Nayapāla, EI. XXII, P. 150ff.

16. EI. XV, P. 295ff.

Irdā Plate¹⁷ of Nayapāla the Brahmin beneficiary Asvattha-sarman is said to have belonged to a teacher's family. He is said to be the son of Upādhyāya Śrī Anukula Miśra and grandson of Upādhyāya Śrī Prabhākaraśarman and he himself was well versed in Mīmāṃsā, Vyākaraṇa and Tarka. Another reference to Upādhyāya is found in the Govindapur C. P.¹⁸ of Lakṣmaṇasena which records the grant of a village named Viddāraśāsana to Upādhyāya Śrī Vyāsadevaśarman belonging to the Kauthuma branch of the Sāmaveda. Qualifying epithets like Paṇḍita (Scholar), Ācārya (Teacher) and Nītipāṭhaka (Preceptor) applied to the Brāhmaṇa donees in the Pāla-sena records indicate their recognition as teachers of different categories. Manu (II. 140-141) distinguishes between Upādhyāya and Ācārya. Upādhyāya was one who took to teaching as a profession for his livelihood, while Ācārya taught without charging fees. This distinction might have gradually been abolished. An example of Paṇḍita is to be traced in the Bhuvaneśvara Prasasti of Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva who is described as an exponent of the Brahmādvaita system of philosophy, conversant with the writings of Bhaṭṭa (Kumārila), well-versed in the Arthaśāstra, the Āyurveda, etc., proficient in the Siddhānta, the Tantra and the Ganita with special keenness for Astrology and Astronomy.

17. EI. XXII, P. 150ff.

18. CBI. P. 274.

He is said to have composed works on Horāsāstra, Dharma-sāstra and Mīmāṃsā.¹⁹ It would not be unreasonable to assume that the brahmin teachers were granted plots of cultivable land in lieu of their services to the society, as the income from the land in question might be used for their maintenance. The Brahmins thus laid the foundation of Brāhmanical education in ancient Bengal side by side with their religious activities. Centres of religion like temples and Mathas were centres of education as well. Of course, those were not educational institutions as organised as Buddhist monasteries. Stray references, however, to some big Brāhmanical religious establishment as found in the Paśchimbhāg C.P. of Śrīcandra tend to show that the Brāhmanical educational system gradually took an almost institutionalised shape from the 10th century onwards under the direct supervision of the Brāhmaṇas.

Worshippers of the Purānic deities :

The Brahmin priestly class enlivened their religious activities all over Bengal through the worship of Purānic deities like Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara, Śakti and other minor gods and goddesses. Various forms of these deities were worshipped in temples of ancient Bengal which were mostly in charge of brahmin priests. Sectarian beliefs of

19. Ibid., P. 352, vv. 20-23.

these priests may at best be explained in the light of epigraphic records of Bengal which record the erection of a number of temples and installation of the images of Purānic deities in different parts of Bengal. Several land-grant charters of Bengal issued by different ruling dynasties of Bengal from time to time record donation of land as endowment in favour of temples for the maintenance and worship of the respective deities installed therein. In many cases plots of land were donated to the brahmins attached to these religious establishments. In the Baigrām C.P.²⁰ of Gupta year 128 (= 448 A.D.), we find that plots of land were sold by the government to two individuals named Bhoyila and Bhāskara who purchased them for defraying the expenses of the renovation of the temple of Lord Govindasvāmin, i.e. Viṣṇu, which was formerly founded by their father and for the performance of daily worship of the same god. A Copper-plate grant²¹ of the time of Budhagupta (476-495 A.D.) found at Dāmodarpur refers to land endowments for building two temples and store-rooms for gods Kokāmukhasvāmin and Śvetavarāhasvāmin and one Nāmaliṅga in the village Doṅgā on the summit of the Himālaya / Himavacchikhare Kokāmukhasvāminah catvārah

20. Ibid., P. 50.

21. Ibid., P. 62.

Kulyavāpāḥ Śvetavarāhasvāminopi sapta kulyavāpāḥ, 11.5,6_7.

A perpetual endowment was also made in Koṭivarṣa by another land-charter²² of the Gupta period (224 G.E. = 543 A.D.) by an inhabitant of Ayodhyā for making repairs of the shrine of Bhagavān Śvetavarāhasvāmin in order to increase the religious merits of his mother and for the continuance of bali, caru, satra and the supply of incense, flowers etc.

required for the worship of the god. The existence of a temple to Pradyumne-Śvara in Tipperai District in the 6th century A.D. is proved by the reference to the land donated for it, which formed the western boundary of the low-land endowed to the monastery by the Guṇaighar C.P. grant²³ of Vainyagupta of the Gupta year 188 (= 507 A.D.) [Paścimena Pradyumneśvara - devakula kṣetra - Prāntaḥ, 1.29_7]. At a somewhat later date, king Jīvadhāraṇa, at the request of his powerful feudal chief Lokanātha, granted lands to the Brāhmaṇas for the worship of Lord Anantanārāyaṇa whose temple was erected in the forest-region in Tipperai District²⁴. Another such land-grant in favour of the same god has been made by the Kālhapur C.P.²⁵ of Sāmanta Maruṇḍanātha (dated 7th century A.D.) found in Sylhet region. The Brāhmaṇas

22. Ibid., P. 72.

23. Ibid., P. 67.

24. EI. XV, P. 306ff.

25. CPS. P. 70.

who settled in the easternmost fringe of Bengal seem to have practised the cult of Viṣṇu-worship from an early period.

Even though influence of Buddhism steadily grew during the Pāla period, popularity of Purānic Brāhmanism did not decline, as it is suggested by the epigraphic evidence. The Khalimpur C.P.²⁶ of Dharmapāla records grant of four villages in favour of the god Nannanārāyaṇa (Viṣṇu) at the request of Mahāsāmantādhipati Nārāyaṇavarman who built the temple of the said god. The temple was in charge of a Brāhmaṇa hailing from Lāṭa [Bhagavanna - nnanārāyaṇa - bhaṭṭarakāya tat - pratipālaka - Lāṭadvija - devārcakādi - Pādamūla - sametāya..... caturō grāmān]. The Bāghaurā Nārāyaṇa Image Inscr²⁷ of the time of Mahipāla refers to an image of god Nārāyaṇa in Samatata installed by a merchant named Lokadatta who was a devout Vaiṣṇava. The Bhālgudar Image Inscr.²⁸ of the time of Madanapāla refers to another such image of Nārāyaṇa found in modern Monghyr District. It was installed by two Vaiṣṇavas, named Bhaṭṭa Śrī Sukṛtma and Bhaṭṭa Śrī Abhindra. The worship of god Viṣṇu which the brahmins introduced in Northern

26. CBI., p. 100.

27. EI. XVII, p. 355.

28. ~~Id.~~ XXVIII, Pt. III, p. 137ff.

Bengal from the Gupta period survived even in the 10th century in Eastern Bengal that formed the kingdom of the Buddhist rulers belonging to the Candra dynasty. It seems to have been possible due to the zeal of the brahmin priests who had settled in that region by 6th century A.D. The Maināmati plates²⁹ of Laḍahacandra refer to the gifts of land in favour of the Vaiṣṇavite god Laḍaha - mādhava (Mādhava), a name of Viṣṇu - Kṛṣṇa which was well-known in two places of Samatāṭamaṇḍala. The Betkā Image Inscr.³⁰ of Govindacandra records the installation of the image of Vāsudeva.

The brahmins also worshipped god Śiva in Northern Bengal from the Gupta period. Reference has been made to the god in the record found at Dāmodarpur. The record refers to the installation of a liṅga in the Himalayan region³¹ in addition to the temple of Kokāmukhasvāmin who is identified by some with Lord Śiva³². The Mahābodhi Inscr.³³ of the time

29. EDEP., pp. 74, 76.

30. EI. XXVII, Pt. I, p. 26ff.

31. CBI., p. 62.

32. HAB., pp. 512 - 513.

33. CBI., p. 112.

of Dharmapāla records the installation of four-faced image of Mahādeva at Bodh - Gaya. The Bhāgalpur C.P.³⁴ of Nārāyaṇa-pāla refers to the construction of a temple of Lord Śiva by the king and an endowment of lands for its maintenance, daily worship and comfortable living of the preceptors of the Pāśupata sect who must have belonged to the temple and were brahmins by caste. Another temple of Lord Śiva in Rajshahi District has been referred to in the Bhāturiyā Stone Inscr.³⁵ of Rājyapāla. Reference to an image of Sadāśiva in Northern Bengal in the Rājibpur Image Inscr.³⁶ of Gopāla II or III proves the existence of another Śaivite sect during the Pāla period. A temple of Śiva was erected by a Kāmbōja ruler at Bāngaḍa in Dinajpur District³⁷. The 10th century land - grant records of the Candra rulers of Eastern Bengal refer to the temples dedicated to various forms of Lord Śiva. The Paśchimbhāg C.P.³⁸ of Śrī-Candra refers to the maṭhas of Mahākāla and Yogeśvara, while the

34. Ibid. p. 168.

35. EI. XXXIII, p. 150ff.

36. IHQ. XVII, pp. 207 - 22.

37. cf. Bāngaḍa Pillar Inscr. of Kuñjaraghaṭāvarṣa, JRASB. NS. VII, p. 619.

38. EDEP., pp. 66 - 67.

Bhārella Image Inscr.³⁹ of Laḍahacandra and the Maināmati Plate⁴⁰ of Govindacandra inform us of the installation of the images of Naṭeśvara Śiva whose worship was probably imported from South India⁴¹. The spread of Brāhmanical religion reached its zenith during the Sena rule. A lofty temple of Pradyumneśvara was built by Vijayasena. The brahmins were worshippers of other Purānic deities like Sūrya, Kārttikeya, Gaṇeśa, Pārvatī, Umā, Caṇḍī etc. There is abundant evidence of the Sun - worship prevalent in ancient Bengal. The sun - cult seems to have been imported in Bengal by the Magas of Śakadvīpa. According to the account recorded in the Govindapur Inscr.⁴² found in Gaya district and dated Śaka 1059 (= 1137 - 38 A.D.), the Maga Brāhmaṇas were brought to India by Śāmba, son of Kṛṣṇa for the worship of the Sun - god. The tradition is supported by the injunctions laid down in Varāhamihira's Brhatsamhitā (60, 19) that installation and consecration of the images and temples of Sun (Sūrya) should be made by the Magas and they should perform the worship of the deity. The Śākadvīpī Brāhmaṇas mentioned in the Kulaji texts of Bengal might be the descendants of the Magas (Priests) of Iran and initiated the Sun - worship

39. EI. XVII, p. 349.

40. EDEP, p. 80.

41. Ibid., p. 55.

42. EI. II, p. 333.

in ancient Bengal. The oldest Sūrya image in Bengal found at Niyamatpur (Rajshahi District) shows distinct traces of Kuṣāṇa features like long tunic, low head - dress and high boots⁴³. Many Sun-images of the Gupta and post-Gupta period have come to light. We find the Sun - god Image Inscr.⁴⁴ of Govinda-Candra (dated in 12th regnal year) in Kulkudī (Eastern Bengal). A stone figure of Sūrya found at Koṭālīpāḍā and dated in the 11th century A.D. represents the fully developed type of Sūrya. Another seated image of the Sun with an inscription describing the deity as the "remover of all diseases" Samasta-rogaṇām hartā⁴⁵ was found in Dinajpur District. The popularity of the Sun - worship at the initiative of the brahmins reached its zenith by the end of the Sena rule as it is indicated by the opening verse in the Copper Plates of Viśvarūpasena and Keśavasena in praise of the Sun- god Vande Arāṇḍa - vana - bāṇdhavamandhakārakārā-nibaddha-bhuvanatraya-muktihe-
tum''' I adore that friend of the bed of lotuses, cause of deliverance of the world, confined in the prison of darkness." V.1⁴⁶.

43. HAB., p. 555.

44. EI. XXVII, p. 24.

45. JASB. XXVI, P. 147.

46. CBI. pp. 322, 334.

We do not know how far the Brahmanas in ancient Bengal practised Śakti-worship. Images of goddesses like Pārvatī, Śarvāṇī etc. with inscriptions have been discovered in different places of ancient Bēngal⁴⁷.

It proves beyond doubt from what has been said above that the brahmin priests fostered the growth of Purāṇic forms of Brāhmanical religion side by side with the Vedic cult in Bengal and made a unique combination of both by performing Vedic sacrifices concurrently with the worship of the gods in temples with flowers, incense, lamp etc. which are essentials in Purāṇic rituals. It would not be out of place to point out that temple - priests, or Devala Brāhmaṇas, a class by themselves, were looked down upon in early times and are regarded as inferior even in modern days [Devārcanaparo vipro vittārthī vatsaratrayam-asau devalako nāma havyakavyeṣu garhitah Devakoṣopajīvi nāmnā devalako bhavet apāṁkteyaḥ sa vijñeyah sarvakarmasu sarvadā. Devala quoted in Smṛticandrikā II, P. 396, the verse is quoted by Aparārka also, PP. 450, a 23⁴⁸. But epigraphic

47. Pārvatī Image Inscr. of Nārāyaṇapāla, IA. XIVII,

P. 110ff. Deulbāḍī Śarvāṇī Image Inscr. of Prabhāvatī,

EI. XVII, P. 357ff.

48. HD, P. 109.
—,

records of Bengal do not indicate the degraded position of the temple - priests. On the other hand, the king granted land for the maintenance of those Brāhmaṇas, so that they felt encouraged to perform Vedic sacrifices and worship of the Purāṇic gods.

Brāhmaṇas as astrologers :

In addition to the prescribed occupations, the brahmins sometimes took keen interest in astrology (Jyotiṣa) that is, the science dealing with the influence of stars and planets on human destiny which formed one of the six Vedāṅgas studied by the brahmins in Bengal [ṣaḍaṅgādhyāyine Śrī - Udayakaradevaśarmā]⁴⁹. Calculating the position of stars and planets they could foretell prosperity or calamities that might fall to the fate of an individual or the community and thus provided guidance to all classes of people from the King to the cultivators. Kings were benefitted by the advice of astrologers in the affairs of the State and even at the time of undertaking military expeditions. It is for this reason that Kauṭilya recommends knowledge in astrology as one of the requisite qualifications of an ideal Purohita

49. cf. Barrackpore C.P. of Vijayasena, I.B., P. 57ff.

who was supposed to guide the king in all affairs

[/Purohitamuditoditakulaśīlaṃ ṣaḍaṅgaṃ Vede daive.....

Pratikartāraṃ Kurvīta⁵⁰. The brahmin counsellor of the

King was often a good astrologer. In the Bādal Pillar Inscr.

Guravamiśra, the Brāhmaṇa minister of King Nārāyaṇapāla,

is praised as a great astrologer [/niṣṇātātāṃ jyotiṣo

yasya, V. 20⁵¹. A group of brahmins took astrology as the

sole profession and were known as Graha - vipras in ancient

Bengal. The origin of this group of Brāhmaṇas has already

been discussed. Epigraphic evidence is very scanty to prove

the existence of this class of Brāhmaṇas in ancient Bengal.

⁵²
In the Rāmapāla C.P. of Śrīcandra, astrologers are said to
have indicated the royal mark of Śrīcandra at the time of

his birth [/Mauhūrttikaiḥ sūcitarājaciḥṇam Avāpa tasyāṃ

tanayam, V. 7⁷. A single reference to the term gaṇaka in

the Paśchimbhāg C.P. of Śrīcandra may be taken into consi-

deration in this connection. The term may mean 'an astrologer'

or 'an accountant'. Minhajuddin's account in Tabaquat - i -

Nasiri seems to suggest that Lakṣmaṇasena did not take

precautionary measure, when he had come to know from

50. AŚ, Vol. I, BK. I. ix, P. 9.

51. CBI, P. 154.

52. Ibid., P. 244.

court-astrologers that the Turkish invasion of Bengal was inevitable and irresistible.

Brāhmaṇas in administration :

The Brāhmaṇas served in different capacities within the framework of the State - machinery. The Brāhmaṇas held the official status of 'Purohita' or 'Mahāpurohita'.⁵³ The etymological meaning of the term is one who is placed foremost [/Purah enam dadhāti iti Purohitaḥ_]⁵⁴; that is, one who leads others to good . The brahmins often acted as royal priests (Rājapurohita), guided the king in his domestic as well as State-affairs and assisted him in determining his social and religious policy. Kauṭilya realises the necessity of appointing royal priest along with ministers and urges their proficiency in the Vedas and Daṇḍanīti (Science of Polity) among other requisites for the post [/Purohita-muditoditakulaśīlaṁ śaḍaṅgaṁ Vede daive nimitte daṇḍanītyāṁ ca abhivinītamāpadāṁ daivamānuṣīṇāṁ atharvabhirupāyaisca Pratikartāraṁ kurvīta_].⁵⁵

53. Ibid., PP. 261, 273, 280, 291, 297, 305, 316, 325, 337.

54. Yāska's Niruktaṁ, II.12 .

55. AŚ. Vol. I, BK I, IX, P. 9.

In the Irdā C.P. of Kāmbōja Nayapāla and in the Belāva C.P.⁵⁶ of Bhojavarman, 'Purohita' finds mention in the list of officials, while the Sena Copper-Plates mention either Purohita or Mahāpurohita. In addition to Purohita, we find reference to another official designation, Śāntyāgārika, Śāntivārika or Śāntyāgārādhikṛta in the Bengal epigraphs. The official so designated was, no doubt, a Brāhmaṇa placed in charge of propitiatory rites. It appears from the epigraphic records that they were remunerated by the king with gifts of lands. Both the Rāmapāla C.P. of Śrīcandra and the Belāva C.P. of Bhojavarman record land - endowments to Śāntivārika Pītavāsaguptaśarman (Koṭihomaṅgatavate) and Śāntyāgārādhikṛta Rāmadevaśarman respectively. The Mādhāi-nagar Grant⁵⁷ and the Sunderban Grant⁵⁸ of Lakṣmaṇasena refer to a number of land - endowments in favour of some Śāntyāgārikas.

Brāhmaṇas as Counsellors :

Significantly enough, the Pāla records never enlist Purohita or Śāntyāgārika among the officials of the State.

56. EI. XXII, P. 150ff.; CBI. P. 238.

57. CBI. P. 281.

58. Ibid. P. 291.

But the position of the Brāhmaṇa counsellors was recognized by the Pāla administrators. The Bādal Pillar Inscr. of Nārāyaṇapāla opens with the genealogical account of a brahmin family of the Śāṇḍilya gotra that produced an uninterrupted line of scholars and statesmen. Functions of counsellors are said to have been discharged by Garga, Darbhapāṇi, Someśvara, Kedāramiśra and Guravamiśra, although no specific reference is made to their official designation. Garga claims to have made Dharmapāla the master of the 'whole world' [dharmah kṛtastadadhipastvakhilāsu dikṣu svāmī mayeti vijahāsa Brhaspatiṃyah, V. 2]. His son Darbhapāṇi, by dint of his policy, made the long stretch of territory from the Himalayas to the Vindhya tributary to Dharmapāla's son and successor Devapāla [nītyā yasya bhuvaṃ cakāra karadām Śrī Devapālo nṛpah, V. 5]. Darbhapāṇi's son Someśvara, who also lived during Devapāla's reign, enjoyed the confidence of the sovereign [Someśvara Śrīmān Parameśvara - vallabhah, V..8]. His son Kedāramiśra is credited with the entire responsibility for the success that attended Devapāla's relations with the Utkalas, the Hūṇas, the Gurjaras and the Draviḍas (V. 13). Kedāramiśra was also associated with the reign of Śūrapāla. His son was Guravamiśra whose skill and devotion in polity won the admiration of his sovereign Nārāyaṇapāla [Kuśalo guṇavān vivektuṃ vijigīṣuryannṛpaśca bahumene, V. 19]. It

was Bhaṭṭa Guravamiśra who acted as a messenger in connection with the Bhāgalpur Grant⁵⁹ of Nārāyaṇapāla [Bhaṭṭa Śrīmāniha sa Guravo dūtakaḥ puṇyakīrttiḥ, V. 18]. The place of honour accorded to the Brāhmaṇas in the Pāla-court is evident from some verses contained in the Bādal Pillar Inscr. (VV. 6 - 7). A.K. Maitreya has suggested that the Pala rulers were anxious to pay homage to the brahmin^{ministers} who had given leadership to the people (Prakṛti) playing a part in the election of Gopāla I to kingship⁶⁰. Dr. B.C. Sen, on the other hand, does not think that those ministers were responsible to any group of people except the king.

However, the principle of upholding the hereditary rights of ministers, as suggested by Ācārya Kaṇṇapadanta, a predecessor of Kauṭilya, seems to have continued to be followed from the time of the Pālas to that of the Varmans. The Bhuvaneśvar Prasasti of Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva (11th century A.D.) furnishes the genealogical account of a Rādhīya brahmin family of outstanding scholarship to which belonged Bhavadeva, Minister of Harivarman, king of the Varman dynasty of East Bengal. The inscription seems to indicate that Ādideva, the grandfather

59. CBI. P. 159.

60. GL. P. 97.

of Bhavadeva II, served under a Candra king. His son Govardhana may also have been connected with the Candra dynasty, but Govardhana's son Bhavadeva who was an erudite scholar in different branches of knowledge including Polity, assisted, by the power of his counsel, king Harivarman to attain victory (V. 16). The royal preceptors often played the role of counsellors during the Sena period. Vallālasena's preceptor Aniruddhabhaṭṭa and Rājapaṇḍita Halāyūḍha in the court of Lakṣmaṇasena had exerted considerable influence over their royal patrons. In his Brāhmaṇasarvasva, Halāyūḍha narrates his own career. Being appointed as Rājapaṇḍita in his early career, Halāyūḍha was given the post of Mahāmahattaka, a term which has been interpreted by N.G. Majumder as Prime - minister. Later, he became a Dharmādhyakṣa (V. 12)⁶¹.

The available data, both epigraphic and literary, therefore, leave no doubt that the brahmin ministers used to be appointed by the rulers in ancient Bengal, whether they themselves were inclined towards Brāhmanism or Buddhism. There seem to have been reasons behind this policy followed consistently by the rulers. To maintain law and order in the society based on Varnāśramadharmā and to explain the social

61. BRS. P. 2.

status of different castes along with their respective duties and functions, the king might have felt an indispensibility of the wise counsel of the Brāhmaṇas who possessed mastery over both the Śruti and Smṛti. Manu (ch. II.12) enumerates four sources of law, viz. Śruti or the Vedas, Smṛti, customs of holy men (Śiṣṭācāra) and one's own inclination (Ātmatuṣṭi). It appears from the Manusmṛiti that in case of conflict the Śruti prevails over Smṛti and that the Śruti and Smṛti have precedence over other two sources of law [Dharmān jijnāsamānānām Pramāṇam paramam Śrutiḥ, v. 13, Śrutidvaidhantu yatra syāttatra dharmābubhau smṛtau Ubhāvapi hi tau dharmau samyaguktau manīṣibhiḥ, v. 14]. According to Kaṭilya, Dharma (sacred law), Vyāvahāra (contract), Caritra (custom) and Rājaśāsana (royal decree) are the sources of law, the last one being regarded as the foremost. In most of the Dharmaśāstras, on the other hand, the foremost position is held by sacred law which is first exposed in the Śruti and later explained in the Smṛti. No doubt, the State-policy was determined, to a great extent, by the interpretation of law as given by brahmin counsellors in the light of the injunctions of the Dharmaśāstras, favouring the maintenance of the social order giving emphasis upon the caste - hierarchy. The brahmins seem to have been anxious to maintain their privileged position.

Brāhmaṇas in Judicial Administration :

The Brāhmaṇas held the posts of Judges in the law - court. Halāyūdhā was Dharmādhyakṣa in the reign of Lakṣmaṇasena. Dharmādhyakṣa and Mahādharmaḍhyakṣa stand for Judge and Chief Judge. P.V. Kane suggests that the functions of Purohita which included looking after certain religious affairs of the State were discharged by Dharmādhyakṣa⁶². But mention of Mahādharmaḍhyakṣa immediately after Purohita or Mahāpurohita in the Sena records stands against this view. The term Dharma stands for "sacred law" which formed the basis of justice. In the Dharmasthīya-Adhikaraṇa of the Arthaśāstra, Kauṭilya deals with various kinds of legal procedures and the officer called Dharmastha was held responsible for conducting these procedures. Dharmādhyakṣa in the Sena records, therefore, appears to have served in the office of Justice.

Brāhmaṇas' knowledge in Military Science :

The Brāhmaṇas proved themselves competent even in military profession. Since very early times, Brāhmaṇas

62. Ibid. P. XVIII, 31n.

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appear to have followed the profession of arms [cf. Pāṇini, V. 271, 'brāhmaṇaka' as applied to a country in which Brāhmaṇas follow the profession of arms]⁶³. Kauṭilya quotes the view of his predecessors that when there are armies composed of Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras, each preceding one is better for enlistment than each subsequent. [Brāhmaṇakṣatriyavaiśyaśūdrasainyānām tejaḥprādhānyāt purvaṁ purāṁ śreyassaṁnāhayitum ityācāryāḥ 1]⁶⁴: Kauṭilya, himself however, does not subscribe to the view. In the Bādal Pillar Inscr., Nārāyaṇapāla's minister Guravamīśra is said to have accompanied the king to the battlefield. He seems to have acted in the capacity of Minister of War and Peace (Mahāsāndhivigraha^{hi}). It is difficult to ascertain if the Brāhmaṇa, in the capacity of a Minister of War and Peace, ever participated in battles and wars or only advised the king on the policy of war and peace. Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva is also said to have great command over scripture and sceptre (Astraveda). But we do not know whether he displayed talent as a warrior.

63. HD. P. 122.

64. AS[']. Vol. II, BK. IX. II, P. 81

It appears quite clear from the available epigraphic data that Brāhmaṇas in ancient Bengal adopted various avocations, deviating from their own as prescribed by the Smṛtikāras. They might have been forced to adopt other occupations that might serve their economic needs. The professions of a teacher and a priest might not always provide them financial solvency. The emoluments of officiating priests and occasional gifts given by charitably disposed persons might not be considered safe means of livelihood. All Brāhmaṇas might not have possessed mastery over a branch of the Vedas. It is no wonder, therefore, that some of them were compelled to pursue for their livelihood avocations other than the prescribed ones. Legal texts, however, sometimes enjoin for three upper varṇas avocations other than their own. Thus Gautama (VII. 6 & 7)⁶⁵ states that Brāhmaṇa should adopt the profession of Kṣatriya or Vaiśya in times of distress. In fact, the widespread practice of land - donations to Brāhmaṇas might have demanded from them more and more attention to agriculture. The State-policy of making liberal donation of land was motivated not only by a religious motive but also by an economic purpose. The rulers concerned aimed at an economic development by

65. HD., P. 118.

bringing more and more land under cultivation. The Brāhmaṇas got their land cultivated by the karṣakas (cultivators) who were mainly Śūdras. Agriculture was, however, recommended by the Dharmasūtras and Dharmaśāstras as means of livelihood for the brahmins⁶⁶. It appears from what has been stated by the Smṛtinivandhakāras of Bengal that among the Brāhmaṇas cultivation of the Vedic study, rites and rituals gradually declined. It might have been due to their deviation from their prescribed occupations for a long time.

Socio - economic position :

The Brāhmaṇas were generally held in high esteem in the framework of the Cāturvarṇya system. Their social status did not suffer any decline on account of the state - patronage towards them. The Brāhmaṇas, in service of the State, enjoyed naturally economic and social privileges. Besides, as the rulers in Bengal followed the liberal policy of granting land to the Brāhmaṇas, the latter emerged in no time as a land - owning class. The Brāhmaṇas used to enjoy immunities from taxation by the State [cf. Pratibāsibhiḥ kṣetrakaraiścājñāśravaṇavidheairbhūtvā samucita - kara -

66. Ibid., P. 125.

pindakādi - sarva - pratyā - yopanayaḥ kārya iti⁶⁷. On the other hand, they were entitled to receive all kinds of revenues payable by those who cultivated land under the sub-infeudation system. Again, the new land - owning class was in charge of maintaining law and order within their jurisdiction, inflicting punishment on those committing crimes [sadaśāpacārah]⁶⁸. Administrative and judicial power, being added to the fiscal privileges, exalted the socio - economic position of the Brahmins to a high degree. The Brāhmaṇas virtually formed an intermediary class between the ruling authority and the peasantry.

Feudal relation between the king and the donees, if any :

Some scholars characterise the relation between the king and the Brāhmaṇa beneficiaries as feudal in character. True it is, the system of land - tenure that existed in the feudal society of medieval Europe was manifest in the largescale practice of land - donations to the priestly class. But the relation that existed between the king and the landed

67. CBI., P. 101.

68. Ibid.

barons in Europe might hardly exist between the king and the Brāhmaṇas in ancient Bengal. In the feudal order of medieval Europe, there was a chain of obligations on the part of the landed aristocracy to the king in respect of some kinds of payments and supplies and rendering military services occasionally. But no such obligation on the part of the Brahmana landowners is implied in any sense by the Bengal epigraphs.

One of the characteristics of European feudalism was the institution of serfdom in which peasants were tied down to the soil under the land-owning class. But the position of the peasants was not at all reduced to that of serfs in Bengal. In case of donation of land and grant of exemption from taxes, the royal ownership over a piece of land or a village was transferred to a brahmin donee, the position of the peasants remaining almost the same as before. It may, however, be argued that the high-handed or vindictive policy of the land-owners might sometimes cause distress to the peasants. The same fate might have been met by the peasants under the exacting revenue officials of the king himself. However, it is difficult to assume that the relation of the Brāhmaṇa donee and the royal donor was feudal in character.

Position in urban society :

The Brāhmaṇas represented the priestly class that included also the Buddhist and Jaina monks. In towns and cities, they were not unoften settled. For instance, in places of pilgrimage, they were guides to the pilgrims and served as priests at temples. At the University-towns like Vikramaśīlā, Odantapurī, Pāhārpur and Nālandā, they were preceptors and teachers. We have already discussed how the brahmins were in charge of Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava monasteries and temples. Again, at the administrative headquarters, the brahmins served the State in the capacity of Mantrin, Purohita or Dharmādhyakṣa.

The settlement of the brahmins in urban areas is evident from some epigraphs where it is stated that the wives of brahmins were introduced by city-damsels to recognise precious stones and jewels from their similitude to flowers and fruits⁶⁹.

69. cf. Deopārā Inscr. of Vijayasena, CBI., P. 248.

Alliance of the Priestly class with the Ruling class

The brahmin community in ancient Bengal seem to have had an entente cordiale with the ruling class. The rulers used to extend their patronage to the Brāhmaṇas in the interest of upholding the Brāhmanical order of the society based on the Cāturvarṇya system. The Brāhmaṇas in turn eulogised the military exploits of the rulers, advised them on their duties and functions and, above all, guided them in the state-graft. It has been aptly remarked by Kauṭilya that the valour of the Kṣatriyas, being enriched by the Brāhmaṇas with counsels, wins everything Brāhma-
ṇenaidhitam kṣatram mantrimantrābhimantritam Jayatya-
jitamatyantam śāstrānugamaśāstritam⁷⁰.

The Brāhmaṇas had hardly any occasion to come in close understanding with other classes of the society. Under the existing land-system, Brahmins appeared to have treated the Karṣakas as their tenants. To others, who needed, they were at best teachers and priests. But the opportunity of having sacrifices performed by them or receiving education from them was not open to all. The two functions of the Brahmins, Adhyāpana and Yājana were discharged mostly for the privileged classes in the society.

70. AS. Vol. I, BK. I. IX, P. 9.

Position in rural society :

The Brāhmaṇas were recognized as the most respectable privileged caste in villages. In the epigraphic records, they have been described as Akṣudraprakṛti,⁷¹ indicating that they were men of prestige and honour. Even the king himself seems to have addressed them with veneration

[cf. Brāhmaṇa - mānanā - pūrvakam, Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla, 1.48]. Kauṭilya felt the necessity of brahmanic settlement in the villages. He enjoins that the brahmin priests (Ṛtvik and Purohita), teacher (Ācārya) and one who studies Veda (Śrotriya) should be gifted with perpetual land-endowment [Ṛtvigācāryapurohitaśrotriyebyo Brahmadeyānyadaṇḍakarānyabhirūpaka - dāyakāni prayacchet]⁷² with exemption from taxes in the villages inhabited by all classes of people. They, being the most distinguished members of the village-society, seem to have had representatives in the village-assembly, and, thus, they guided the village administration. In the donated villages (agrahāra), however, they acquired the administrative power by legal right.

71. cf. Damodarpur C.P. Inscr. (482 A.D.), CBI., P. 59.

72. AS. Vol. I, BK. II. I, P. 26.

In the epigraphic records of the Pāla period mention is made of the Cāturvarṇya-system, that is, the four-fold caste-system, which the rulers, irrespective of their religious faith, attempted to maintain and uphold. But hardly do we find reference to the four castes in any epigraph. Except the Brāhmaṇas, there is specific reference to Caṇḍālas in some records. It is difficult to ascertain on the basis of epigraphic records if there was any other caste (varṇa) in between Brāhmaṇas and Caṇḍālas. In Sena records is mentioned only the term 'Kṣatriya' to refer to the caste of the Sena rulers. The Pālas never refer to their own caste in the records. Therefore, the Varṇa-system, as introduced in Bengal with the advent and settlement of brahmins, seems to have comprised two main castes, viz., Brāhmaṇas and non-Brāhmaṇas (i.e. Samkara or Śūdra according to the Purāṇas). The epigraphic records give us to understand that the brahmins grabbed all power and privileges at the cost of non-brahmins except those belonging to the ruling class. Among the non-brahmins, the rulers, by dint of their military power, wielded political power and prestige, whereas the brahmins enjoyed the highest social prestige and economic privileges. So, powers and privileges were shared between the brahmin caste or the priestly class on the one hand and the military caste or the ruling class on the other. The community at large

were deprived of socio-economic rights and privileges, although they were responsible for producing the wealth of the country. It would not be, therefore, unreasonable to hold that the so-called Cāturvarṇya-system or Brāhmanical social order, as envisaged by the brahmins, was upheld by the rulers of all ages to limit the position of the Śūdras within the limits of their prescribed occupation (dvijāti-śuśrūṣā), that is, rendering service to the twice-born, because, the Brāhmaṇas as well as their allies belonging to the ruling class considered that any allowance of socio-economic privileges to those, who served the society by producing the surplus, would be detrimental to their self-interest, that their position undisputed so far would be challenged by the growing power of the Śūdras. The contribution of the Brāhmaṇas was to maintain status quo and not to allow any qualitative challenge in the society.

CHAPTER III

Caste-system : Mixed Castes

The absence of the Kṣatriyas and the Vaiśyas was the characteristic of the social system in ancient and early medieval Bengal. Epigraphic records and the Purāṇas refer only to the Brāhmaṇas and the Śūdras. Mr. R. P. Chanda explains this phenomenon on the basis of two distinct Aryan immigrations, the Vedic Aryans inhabiting the Eastern Punjab, North Rajputana and the western part of the U.P., while the second group settled in the Outer countries including Gujarat, Central India, South Bihar and Bengal. It is suggested by Hoernle, and following him Grierson, Ginffrida - Ruggerin, Dixon, Hutton and others, that the Indo - Aryans of the Outer countries came earlier. R. P. Chanda suggests that the social organisation imported in the outer countries by the earlier Aryans had only two orders - the Brahmin and the Śūdra. As the four-fold division of society was not indigenous to the Outer countries, but was imported from Vedic Aryandom in an imperfect form, the Kṣatriya and Vaiśya usages failed to make their way therein.¹

1. R. P. Chanda, The Indo-Aryan Races, Calcutta, 1969, P. 24.

Dr. R. C. Majumdar, however, holds that the non-Brahmins who were often called by the generic term Śūdra might have included the upper castes like Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas. This degeneration was perhaps due to the fact that many of the higher castes were influenced by Buddhism and Tāntric Śāktism which were predominant in Bengal as compared with other parts of India since the 8th century A.D.². R. P. Chanda himself has quoted from Raghunandana's Suddhitattva : "The Kṣatriyas of modern times have been degraded to the status of Śūdras. On account of the abandonment of rites, the Vaiśyas and the Ambaṣṭhas also have degenerated [into Śūdras]." ³ The degradation, referred to in this statement, implies that originally there were pure Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas. Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva and Jīmūtavāhana have often referred specifically to the Kṣatriyas and the Vaiśyas in their works.⁴ It may be argued that Bengali nivandhakāras were only interpreters of the law enunciated in the earlier Smṛtis and they composed their works following the tradition of the

2. HAB., P. 427.

3. R. P. Chanda, op. cit., P. 24.

4. PRP. ; Jīmūtavāhana's Dāyabhāga, Tr. by H.T.Colebrooke, Calcutta, 1868.

Cāturvarṇya (four-fold division) system to check its decline due to Varṇa-saṁkara (admixture of castes). Some of the epigraphs of Bengal refer to the state-policy of maintaining Cāturvarṇya system.⁵ In the Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa and Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa, the explanation given for the emergence of mixed-castes presumes the existence of original four castes. It is evident from the Bṛhaddharma-Purāṇa, that the mixed-castes were the products of anuloma or pratiloma marriages between the original four castes, between the originals and mixed-castes and between mixed-castes themselves. If the emergence of the mixed castes is explained by the Purāṇa composed around 14th century, it would not be unreasonable for us to assume that this process of admixture went for a long time for which the existence of four original castes was a pre-requisite. There are incidental references to the Kṣatriyas and the Vaiśyas in the Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa while prescribing the occupations of the Vaidyas and the Māgadhas⁶. It would not be, therefore, unreasonable to assume the existence of original four varṇas at the initial stage of the inclusion of the country in the Aryandom. The expression Brāhmaṇān and Brāhmaṇottarān occurring in the epigraphs of the 12th century A.D.⁷ may be

5. cf. Monghyr C.P. of Devapāla, Mānāhali grant of Madanapāla, CBI., PP. 116, 213.

6. BRDP. III. XIV, VV. 46, 53.

7. cf. Mādhāinaagar grant of Lakṣmaṇasena, CBI., P. 281.

explained to refer to the Brāhmaṇas and three varṇas other than Brāhmaṇas. The epithet Brahma-Kṣatriya used in the Sena records of the 11th century A.D. suggests that the castes designated Brāhmaṇa and Kṣatriya were not unknown in Bengal. After all, most of the epigraphs found in Bengal are Copper-plate Grants recording transactions of land, where the witnesses are known by their position and functions in the bureaucratic hierarchy or in social hierarchy based on the land-system. Mere references to the Kṣatriya and Vaiśya castes would not suffice to satisfy the intention of records to mention functional groups. The negative evidence of land-charters is not enough to suggest the non-existence of the Cāturvarṇya system in early times. Functional groups of people mentioned in the epigraphic records seem to have formed occupational castes, the origin of which has been sought to be explained by the traditional theory of Samkara.

An attempt may be made to examine the extant theories in the light of the epigraphic data and thus trace the origin and growth of mixed-castes in ancient and early medieval Bengal.

Smṛti view : According to the Mānavadharmasāstra, the four original varṇas, namely Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya,

Śūdra were created from the mouth, arms, thighs and feet respectively of Brahma⁸. Then numerous subcastes or jātis arose out of a series of cross-breeding, first between the male and female of four primitive castes and then between the descendants of these initial unions⁹.

Manu enumerates a long list of Jātis of mixed origin on the principles of hypergamy or anuloma (prescribed) and pratiloma (forbidden) unions. An examination of the list of the mixed-castes will reveal their categorisation on some definite principles, viz., (1) those whose father and mother both belong to some mixed-castes. Castes like Karaṇas (Vaiśya + Śūdra), Ambaṣṭhas (Brāhmaṇa + Vaiśya), Niṣādas or Pāraśavas (Brāhmaṇa + Śūdra) etc. belong to Class I, while Class II includes castes like - Āvṛta (Brāhmaṇa + Ugra), Ābhīra (Brāhmaṇa + Ambaṣṭha), Pukkasa (Niṣāda + Śūdra, V. 18) etc. Low castes like Mārgava or Kaivarta or Dāsa (Niṣāda + Āyogava, V. 34), Meda (Vaideha + Niṣāda), Andhra (Vaideha + Karavāra) etc. are included in Class III. It is to be noted, however, that there are discrepancies between different Smṛtis as regards the origin of mixed castes, which suggest that conventions

8. MS. I. 31.

9. Ibid. X. 7-24.

varied from time to time and from place to place.

Following the Smṛti rule, the Br̥haddharma Purāṇa of Bengal describes how king Vena violated the rules of Varṇāśrama and created a number of mixed-castes by forcing the unions of males and females belonging, not only to the original four castes, but also, to the mixed castes resulting from their union. But the enumeration of castes in the Br̥haddharma and Brahmavaivarta Purāṇas is different from the early legal texts. The occupations for different mixed-castes, as prescribed by Manu, suggest that the means of livelihood were in accordance with the degree of purity or impurity of birth caused by anuloma or pratiloma marriage. In addition to the Varṇa-Saṁkara theory, Manu's theory of Vrātya (out-caste) explains the origin of a large number of castes. According to Manu, some sub-castes are formed by degradation from the original castes on account of non-observance of sacred rites. These are called Vrātyas. It is interesting to note that many ethnic elements of India and of neighbouring countries are accommodated within the framework of Vrātya. In the Purāṇas of Bengal, however, we do not find confirmation of the theory of Vrātya.

The caste-stratification was based on both birth (jāti) and occupation (vṛtti). Both the Br̥haddharma and Brahmavaivarta Purāṇas lay out the caste-system as

comprising Brahmins and non-Brahmins. The Bṛhaddharma divides the non-Brahmin population into thirty six castes categorised in three sections of mixed-castes (Saṁkaras), viz., Uttama (upper), Madhyama (middle) and Adhama (lower).

The Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa also divides the non-Brahmins in three categories, viz., Sat-Śūdras, Asat-Śūdras and Antyajās. The categorisation in the two Purāṇas follows almost the same principle, that is, castes having less degree of mixture of blood and more of purity of birth should be assigned the higher status in the society. During the early period, in the Dharmaśāstras, the three upper varṇas, namely Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas are found to have been assigned occupations in order of superiority of birth, while the Śūdras occupying the lowest rung of the society were prescribed the lowliest of professions. More or less, the same principle seems to have been adopted even later by the Purāṇas of Bengal. But in some cases the occupational status also was significant enough in determining the social status. With higher degree of the occupation, the higher was the status in society. For, we find in the Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa that the castes named Sūtradhāra (carpenter), Citrakāra (painter), Svarṇakāra (goldsmith) and Suvarṇavaṇik (bullion-merchant) were relegated to the status of Asat-Śūdras from that of Sat-Śūdras, the first two due to neglect of duties and the

rest due to theft of gold. Emphasis has been laid on professions indicating more degree of sophistication and positively contributing to the production of wealth in the country. So, failure to observe properly the prescribed professions that might adversely affect the production in the country might have lowered the position of the castes concerned. Again, it might be that the occupations adopted by some particular castes lost their importance in course of time under some unforeseen circumstances and paved the way towards degradation of their status.

It appears therefore, that the original categorisation was made on the basis of jāti, that is, caste inherited by birth. Later, the social structure hinged upon the basis of higher or lower occupation, which came to be recognised as the most important determining factor. From the Corpus of Bengal inscriptions we get confirmation of this social system. No varṇa except Brāhmaṇa is mentioned in the records, and other castes (non-Brahmins) presumably of mixed origin, are known by their occupations.

Anthropological view :

Anthropologists suggest that the racial admixture contributed to the growth of the caste-system in Bengal.

The socio-anthropological survey reports indicate two broad divisions of the population of Bengal, one consisting of the primitive tribes like the Kols, Sāvaras, Pulindas, Muṇḍās, Hāḍis, Doms, Caṇḍālas and others designated as Mlecchas as well as the other consisting of higher classes of people which came within the framework of the caste-system. The former group represented the original inhabitants of Bengal descended from pre-Aryan Niṣādas who might be designated Austrie linguistically, while the Alpine type succeeding the Niṣādas formed the main element in the composition of the Bengalis. Prof. P. C. Mahalanabis has shown by a statistical analysis of the anthropometric data regarding thirty modern typical castes of Northern India, including seven from Bengal, viz., Brāhmaṇa, Kāyastha, Sadgopa, Kaivarta, Rājavaṁśī, Pod and Bāgdi that an ethnically distinct race formed the background of the society in Bengal¹⁰, because, the Brāhmaṇas resemble the other castes of Bengal more closely than the castes, including Brāhmaṇas of other parts of India. The Kāyasthas show great resemblance with all the Bengal-castes, particularly Sadgopas, Kaivartas and Pods. Again, the Kaivartas, Kāyasthas and Sadgopas show less affinity with lower castes. However, the origin of the ethnic race of Bengal is traced to the

10. JASB. NS. XXIII (1927), PP. 309-22.

brachycephalic people of Alpine and Mediterranean type. The findings of the anthropologists indicate that the Brāhmaṇa and other high castes of Bengal were not descended from the Aryan invaders. Secondly, it is suggested that through admixture of blood that went on throughout the period, the castes in Bengal resembled each other. As pointed out by H. C. Chakladar, on the basis of the anthropometric data, there was striking resemblance between the Rāḍhīya Brāhmaṇas of Calcutta and the Muchis of Birbhum.¹¹ Thus the Smṛti-Purānic theory, distinguishing the Brāhmaṇas from the non-Brahmins, has been exploded by anthropometric data. What transpires from the above is that occupational aristocracy was the main basis on which the higher castes could be distinguished from the lower ones (cf. Medāndhracaṇḍālaparyantān)¹².

Modern view :

In recent times scholars like Stanley Rice¹³ and E.A.H. Blunt¹⁴ have upheld the functional theory of the

11. HAB., P. 20.

12. CBI., P. 119.

13. N. Kundu, Castes & Classes in pre-Muslim Bengal, unpublished, London University Thesis, 1963, P. 74.

14. E.A.H. Blunt, The Caste-system of Northern India, Delhi, 1969, P. 3.

origin of castes. They are of opinion that the common occupation is an important factor contributing to the growth of a particular sub-caste. Development of various industries leads to the division of labour and gives rise to the formation of exclusive occupational groups who uphold their own interests and become solidified into respective castes. These occupational or functional subcastes are described as aggregations of various tribes or pre-existing castes "who have been drawn together by the bond of a common occupation."¹⁵ The divergent elements tied together by a common trade or occupation are separated from their original stocks and crystalised into a new caste following the principle of endogamy. Canstant rise of newer occupations to meet various requirements of material life thus adds to the number of occupational castes. Epigraphic records of Bengal furnish us with a good number of such occupations and occupational castes like, potter, blacksmith, goldsmith, ivoryworker, carpenter, oil-presser, betel-vinegrower, fisherman, washerman, leather-worker etc.

15. Ibid. .

Some scholars, however, have stressed upon the organisation of corporations or guilds as an important factor in the evolution of castes. Guild in ancient India was formed by the people belonging to different castes but following a common profession or occupation. A guild was meant to promote a particular trade or industry. Conglomeration of various castes in a guild thus formed a guild-caste. In ancient India, the mercantile and trading communities as well as the artisan class formed corporations or guilds on a cooperative basis.¹⁶ These communities might be designated as guild-castes inspite of their belonging to different castes. The Śreṣṭhīs (bankers), Sārthavāha (traders) and Kulikas (artisans), often referred to in the Dāmodarpur copper-plate Grants, are known from the Bāsārḥ Seals¹⁷ to have organised themselves into guilds. It was certainly the hereditary nature of occupation that helped the growth of the functional guild-castes in Bengal though with a few cases of exceptions. Reference to a guild-caste in Bengal

16. A.N.Bose, Social and Rural Economy of Northern India, Calcutta, 1961, P. 283.

17. ASIR, 1930-4, PP. 107 f.

is to be hardly found in a record of the post-Gupta period. Instead, we can trace a number of functional castes in Bengal since early times down to the modern period. Those who prefer the functional theory are of opinion that the ranking of any caste depends upon the stage of advancement attained by the trade or industry which it represents.¹⁸ Thus, the castes, following most primitive occupations like hunting, basket-making etc., are regarded as the lowest, the metal-workers, agriculturists and traders who contribute skilled and productive labour to the society are higher in rank and the priestly community representing the highest stage of advancement in culture is honoured most in the society. The nature of social hierarchy, as can be gleaned from the epigraphic records of Bengal, seems to emphasise upon the trade or industry followed in conformity with the advanced or backward stage in cultural attainment.

Before we undertake the discussion on mixed-castes in the light of the epigraphic data, we may take into consideration those listed in the Purāṇas composed about the 14th century in Bengal.

18. N.K.Dutt, Origin and Growth of Caste in India, Vol. I, Calcutta, 1968, PP. 20 - 21.

Enumeration of castes in the Purāṇas of Bengal :

The text of the Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa enumerates forty-one mixed - castes, although it prescribes thirty-six castes. The list of these mixed castes is given below, indicating in each case the nature of admixture :

(a) Uttama Saṁkaras

Male + Female

1. Karaṇa (Vaiśya + Śūdra), scribe.
2. Ambaṣṭha (Brāhmaṇa + Vaiśya), physician.
3. Ugra (Kṣatriya + Vaiśya), cf. Ugra-Kṣatriya (Āgari)
4. Māgadha (Vaiśya + Kṣatriya), court-bard.
5. Tantuvāya (Brāhmaṇa + Kṣatriya), weaver.
6. Ghāndhika - vaṇik (Brāhmaṇa + Vaiśya), dealer in spices,
scent etc.
7. Nāpita (Kṣatriya + Śūdra), barber.
8. Gopa (Vaiśya + Kṣatriya), writer.
9. Karmakāra (Śūdra + Vaiśya), blacksmith.
10. Tailika (Vaiśya + Śūdra), dealer in betelnut.
11. Kumbhakāra (Brāhmaṇa + Kṣatriya), potter.
12. Kāmsyakāra (Brāhmaṇa + Vaiśya), brazier.
13. Śāṅkhika (Brāhmaṇa + Vaiśya), conch-shell worker.
14. Dāsa (Śūdra + Vaiśya), cultivator.
15. Vārajīvi (Brāhmaṇa + Śūdra), betelvine-growers.

16. Modaka (Kṣatriya + Śūdra), sweetmeat-maker.
17. Mālākāra (Kṣatriya + Brāhmaṇa), florist.
18. Sūta (Kṣatriya + Brāhmaṇa), carpenter or bard?
19. Rājputra (Kṣatriya + Vaiśya), Rajputs?
20. Tāmbuli (Vaiśya + Śūdra), betelleaf-seller.

Madhyama - saṁkara

Male + Female

21. Takṣan (Karaṇa + Vaiśya), carpenter.
22. Rajaka (Karaṇa + Vaiśya), washerman.
23. Svarṇakāra (Ambaṣṭha + Vaiśya), goldsmith.
24. Ābhīra (Gopa + Vaiśya), milkman or cowherd.
25. Tailakāraka (Gopa + Vaiśya), oilman.
26. Dhīvara (Gopa + Śūdra), fisherman.
27. Śauṇḍika (Gopa + Śūdra), vintner.
28. Naṭa (Mālākāra + Śūdra), dancer, acrobat or juggler.
29. Svarṇavanik (Ambaṣṭha + Vaiśya), trader in bullion.
30. Śāvaka, Sāraka or Śāvāra (Mālākāra + Śūdra).
31. Śekhara (Māgadha + Vaiśya).
32. Jālika (Māgadha + Śūdra), fisherman.

Adhama - saṁkaras

33. Malegrāhi (Svarṇakāra + Vaidya), a branch of Māl caste.
34. Kuḍava (Svarṇavanik + Vaidya).

35. Caṇḍāla (Śūdra + Brāhmaṇa).
36. Vaḍura (Ābhīra + Gopa).
37. Carmakāra (Takṣan + Vaiśya), leather - worker.
38. Śilpavit (Takṣan + Vaiśya).
39. Ghaṭṭajīvi (Dhaḍaka + Vaiśya).
40. Dolāvāhī (Tailakāraka + Vaiśya).
41. Malla (Dhīvara + Śūdra).

The list of Samkara or mixed - castes given in the Bṛhaddharma-Purāṇa closely resembles that of the Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa upholding three categories of mixed - castes, viz. Sat - śūdras, Asat - śūdras and Antyajas. The list is as follows:

Sat - śūdra

1. Karaṇa
2. Ambaṣṭha
3. Vaidya
4. Gopa
5. Nāpita
6. Bhilla
7. Modaka
8. Kuvara
9. Tāmbulī
10. Svarṇakāra and other merchants.

11. Mālākāra
12. Citrakāra
13. Śaṅkhakāra
14. Kuvindaka (tantuvāya)
15. Kumbhakāra
16. Kāṁśakāra
17. Sūtradhāra

Of these Sat - śūdras mentioned above, Sūtradhāra, Citrakāra, Svarṇakāra and Vanīks associated with the Svarṇakāra were relegated to the position of Asat - śūdra i.e. degraded by the curse of the Brāhmaṇas, the first two for neglecting in their duties and the third and fourth for theft of gold. The list of the Asat - Śūdras stands as follows :

18. Atṭālikākāra (architect)
19. Koṭaka (sthapati + Kumbhakāra), thatcher.
20. Tīvara (Kṣatriya + Rājaputra), hunter¹⁹
21. Tailakāraka
22. Leṭa
23. Malla
24. Carmakāra
25. Śuṇḍi
26. Paṇḍraka (Pod)

19. V.S. Apte, The Practical Sanskrit English Dictionary ,
Delhi, 1978, P. 476.

27. Māmsaccheda
28. Rājaputra (Raut)
29. Kaiivarta (Dhīvara)
30. Rajaka
31. Kauyāli
32. Gaṅgāputra
33. Yuṅgi (Yugi)
34. Āgarī
35. Vyādha
36. Bhaḍa
37. Kāpāli
38. Kola
39. Koñca
40. Haḍḍī
41. Jolā
42. Bāgatīta
43. Śāraka
44. Vyālagrāhī
45. Caṇḍāla

From a comparative study of the lists of both the Purāṇas, it is clear that the Sat - śūdra group of Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa is almost identical with the Uttama - Saṁkara class of the Brhaddharma Purāṇa. Ugra and Rājaputra are included in the Uttama Saṁkara group of the latter, while the Asat - śūdra

group of the former accomodates them. Besides, Māgadha, Gandha-
Vanik, Tailika, Dāsa, Vāraṇṣī and Sūta belonging to the
Uttama - Saṁkara group in the Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa are conspicuous
by their absence in the Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa, where mention
is made of Vaidya other than Ambaṣṭha, and the tribal castes,
namely, Bhilla, Kuvara, Kuvindaka, referred to in the Brahmavai-
varta Purāṇa seems to be identical with Tantuvāya mentioned in
the Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa. The Madhyamasamkara of the one almost
corresponds to the Asat - śūdra of the other. Only Ābhira, Naṭa,
Śāvāka, Śekhara and Jālika belonging to Madhyamasamkara are not
found in the Asat - śūdra group that includes Aṭṭalikākāra,
Koṭaka, Leṭa, Malla, Carmakāra, Paundraka, Māmsaccheda, Kaivarta,
Gaṅgāputra, Yuṅgi, Āgari and Kauyālī. Dhīvara and Jālika, referred
to in the Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa, may correspond to the Kaivarta
in the Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa. Kaivarta seems to have adopted
the occupation of Dhīvara. Adhamasamkara group of the
Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa corresponds to the Antyajās of the
Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa, although the names of the castes
included therein vary to some extent. Most of these antyajās
or out-castes are still met with in Bengal. Carmakāra and
Malla belonging to Adhamasamkara of the Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa
have been promoted to the Asat-śūdra status in the Brahma-
vavivarta Purāṇa. Some of the mixed-castes belonging to the
Madhyama and Adhamasamkara status in the Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa

and those of Asat-sūdra and Antyaja status in the Brahma-
vaivarta Purāṇa are known by the generic title Antyaja only
in Bhavadeva Bhaṭṭa's Prāyaścittaprakaraṇam. The author
mentions seven Antyajās, namely, Rajaka, Karmakāra, Naṭa,
Varuḍa, Kaivarta, Meda and Bhilla. [Rajakaścarmakāraśca
naṭo varuḍa eva ca|Kaivarta - meda - bhillaśca saptaite
cāntyajāḥ smṛtāḥ] 20. In addition to the seven castes,
specifically known as Antyajās, the said text also mentions
a number of other lower castes, viz., Pukkasa, Kāpālika,
Nartaka, Takṣaṇa, Suvarṇakāra, Saundika²¹ etc. all of whom
find mention in the last two grades of mixed castes in both
the Purāṇas of Bengal. In spite of some variations regarding
the caste - name in the aforesaid texts, the way of strati-
fication is more or less the same which, in fact, leaves us
to postulate the social structure that existed in Bengal
during the early period.

Mixed - castes in the Epigraphs of Bengal :

The existence of mixed - castes in Bengal during
ancient and early medieval period is vouchsafed for by the

20. PRP, P. 94.

21. Ibid, P. 60.

evidence of epigraphs under our study. In some records they are directly mentioned, while, in others, their existence is to be derived from indirect evidence.

Karaṇa - Kāyastha :

Karaṇa appear to have been the most prominent among the non - brahmin castes of ancient Bengal. This is evident not only from the eulogy of this caste in the Bṛhaddharma,²² but also from the high offices held by the members belonging to this caste, as it is known from the epigraphic records. In the Smṛti literature Karaṇa represents a mixed - caste produced by the union of a Vaiśya father and a Sūdra mother. The Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa ascribes to the Karaṇas the occupation of official work including that of the scribe
Iti yuktavatsu vipreṣu Karaṇo nāmo saṁkaraḥ Rājakāryeṣu kuśalo
lipikarmaviśāradaḥ ^{III.} XIV. 33 - 34 7.

The first epigraphic reference to Karaṇa is found in the Tipperā C.P. of Sāmanta Lokanātha who himself is described

22. Ayantu Karaṇo nāma Śriyukto vartatām sadā Vinayācāra-
sampanno vacanaṁ suṣṭhu caktavān Rājakāryaṁ karotveṣa
nītijño drśyate hyayaṁ Brāhmaṇe Bhaktimāṁścaiva deveṣvapi
bhavatvapi ^{III.} XIV, VV. 30 - 31.

as Karāṇa [Śrī-paṭṭaprāpta-karaṇāya] ²³ Lokanātha's maternal grandfather was a Pāraśava, who was born of Brāhmaṇa father and Śūdra mother. Lokanātha's mother being a daughter of Pāraśava, a mixed - caste, might be regarded as Śūdra. But Lokanātha's paternal ancestors are all said to have belonged to the Brahmin family. The silence about the caste - origin of Lokanātha's father makes us believe in the Brahmin origin of his father. So Lokanātha, who was the offspring of a Brāhmaṇa father and Śūdra mother, cannot be a member of the traditional Karāṇa caste which, according to the Smṛtis, was formed of Vaiśya-Śūdra union. P.V.Kane suggests that Karāṇa may be taken to be an abbreviation of Adhikaraṇa, and Śrī-paṭṭaprāptakaraṇa should be explained as one who has obtained the office (Karāṇa) under royal charter [Śrī-paṭṭena prāptaṁ karaṇaṁ yena sah]. ²⁴ In the Manusāṁhitā, 'Karāṇa' means document. ²⁵ Karāṇa in the inscription may, therefore, mean the office of documents. Therefore, Karaṇika should mean the record - keeper. There is a reference to a Nyāyakarāṇika (i.e. recordkeeper in the judicial department) named Janārdanasvāmī who was, perhaps, Brāhmaṇa by caste. ²⁶ In the Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla, Karaṇas have

23. EI. XV., P. 306 ff.

24. IHQ. XI (1935), P. 586.

25. MS. VIII. 51, 52, 154.

26. Nidhānpur C.P. of Bhāskaravarman, pl. VII, CPS., P. 22.

been mentioned along with others (prativāsinah) witnessing the land-transaction [Sakaraṇān prativāsinah kṣetrakarāṁśca Brāhmaṇamānanāpūrvakam]. The expression "Sakaraṇān Prativāsinah" might denote Karaṇa and other such occupational castes as referred to in the Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa or Brahmavai-varta Purāṇa. In the Irdā C.P., Kāmbōja Nayapāla Karaṇas have been referred to along with royal officials. In Kṣīrasvāmi's commentary on the Amarakoṣa, 'Karaṇa' denotes a group of officers and the term in the Irdā C.P. might have been reasonably used in the same sense. As Karaṇa, being used in the sense of royal officers, stands for 'Writers or Recordkeepers' in the Manusmṛhitā, the designation Mahākaraṇādhyakṣa in the Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa²⁷ denotes "Superintendent of the head-office of the Writers or Recordkeepers". Karaṇika is mentioned in the Tipperā C.P.²⁸ of Bhavadeva along with the royal officials. On the other hand, the existence of Karaṇa as a caste is attested by literary evidence too. Sandhyākaranandin, the author of the Rāma-caritam, describes his father as the foremost of the Karaṇas [Karaṇānāmagraṇī]²⁹ and Minister for Peace and War. The author of a medical treatise called Śabdapradīpa, describes

27. CBI., P. 362.

28. JASL., XVII (1951), P. 83.

29. RC., Kavipraśasti, V.3, P. 98.

himself as belonging to a Karaṇa family [Karaṇānvaya].³⁰ Karaṇa thus appears both as caste and official designation in the epigraphs and literary texts. It may be reasonably inferred that it was the official designation which turned, in course of times, into a caste-name. Of course, the epigraphs clearly suggest that the post of the Karaṇika was not held always by members of a particular caste, for, we come to know of a Brāhmaṇa named Janārdanasvāmī appointed in the post of Nyāyakaraṇika mentioned in the Nidhānpur C.P. of Bhāskaravarman and of a Brāhmaṇa Karaṇika in the Dhod Inscr.³¹ (Rajputana) dated 1171 A.D. and Mādurā Inscr.³² dated 1586 A.D. The Karaṇas do not seem to have been especially connected with any one of the original four Varnas. That explains why their mixed caste-origin has been underlined in the Purāṇas. Functionally, Karaṇas seem to have been equated with the Kāyasthas who are known to have served the king in the capacity of scribe, accountant and revenue - collector.³³ The lexicographer Vaijayantī (11th century A.D.) equates Kāyastha and

30. Cat. of Skt. MSS. in the Library of the India office, London, by J. Eggeling ; London, 1887.

31. Bhandarkar's List, No. 350.

32. EI. XII, P. 167.

33. cf. Kāyasthāḥ gaṇakāḥ lekhaḥkāśca, Vijñāneśvara's Commentary on Yājñavalkya Saṃhitā 1. 335; Kāyasthāḥ Karādhikṛtāḥ, Aparārka's Commentary on Yājñavalkya Saṃhitā Ananda Sanskrit Series, No. 46, P. 584.

Karaṇa and explains it to stand for 'scribe' [Kāyasthaḥ
syāllipikāraḥ karaṇo - kṣarajīvinah lekhaḥ - kṣaracañcuśca]³⁴
Prathama - Kāyastha mentioned in the Dāmodarpur C.P. grants³⁵
of the Gupta period was one of the members of the District
Advisory Board. The term has been explained by some as the
Chief Secretary to the District government.³⁶ In the Guṇai-
ghar C.P.³⁷ of Vainyagupta found in Tippera district, Kāyas-
tha Naradatta is found to have held the post in the office
of Peace and War [Sandhivigrahādhikaraṇa - kāyastha]. In
the Faridpur C.P. s³⁸ of Dharmāditya and Gopacandra, the
District Advisory Board is headed by Jyeṣṭha - Kāyastha who
seems to have held the status equal to that of Prathama -
Kāyastha. It may be reasonably suggested that Jyeṣṭha or
Prathama - Kāyastha had under him officials styled Kāyasthas.
The Nidhānpur C.P. (seventh plate) mentions one Kāyastha
Dundhunātha involved in the task of issuing land - charter
of the State. In all likelihood, the Kāyastha was invited in
this case to stamp the document with his seal, as it is

34. Quoted in HAB. fn. 67, P. 495.

35. CBI. PP. 45, 47, 62, 71.

36. SHAIB. P. 501.

37. CBI., P. 66.

38. Ibid. PP. 80, 84.

suggested by the Viṣṇusmṛti ∕ Rājādhikaraṇe tanniyuktakāyas-
thakṛtaṃ tadadhyakṣakaracihnitaṃ rājāsāksikam 7.³⁹ That the
validity of a royal - charter depended upon the signature
of, or, endorsement by, the Kāyastha has also been recog-
nised by Medhātithi while commenting on V. 3, ch. VIII of
the Manusmṛhitā ∕ Rājāgrahāraśāsanānyeka - kāyastha - hasta -
likhitānyeva Pramāṇī - bhavanti 7.⁴⁰ Though the Bṛhaddharma
and Brahmavaivarta Purāṇas do not include the Kāyastha in
the list of mixed - castes, stray reference to the term in
the latter along with other occupational castes as Svarṇakāra
and Svarṇavanik suggest that the Kāyasthas were being
crystalised into an occupational caste. But their social
status seems to have not been much higher than that of
Svarṇakāra and Suvarṇavanik who are referred to in contemp-
tuous terms in the text ∕ Svarṇakāraḥ svarṇavanik Kāyasthaśca
vrajeśvara | Nareṣu madhye te dhūrttāḥ kṛpāhīnāḥ māhītale 7.⁴¹.
Two later Smṛtis, namely, those of Vedavyāsa and Uśanas,
however, refer to the Kāyastha as a caste and the former
places them in the rank of Śūdra along with barbers, potters
etc. ∕ Vardhakī nāpito gopa āśāpaḥ kumbhakāraḥ Vanik - kirāta -

39. Viṣṇusmṛti, 7/3.

40. Medhātithi on Manu VIII. 3.

41. Viśvakoṣa, Vol. III, P. 568.

kāyastha - mālākāra - kuṭumbinaḥ Ete cānye vahavaḥ Śūdrā
bhinnā svakarmabhiḥ ⁷⁴².

From literary as well as epigraphic sources, it is clear that 'Kāyastha' as a caste - designation got currency in Rāḍha during the 10th century A.D. In Śrīdharadāsa's Nyāyakandalī, commentary on Prasastapāda's Vaiśeṣika-sūtra, it is stated that he composed the work at Bhurīśreṣṭhī in Dakṣiṇa - Rāḍha in Śaka 913 (= 991 A.D.) at the request of one Pāṇḍudāsa who was the crest - jewel of the Kāyastha family guṇaratnābharanah. Kāyasthakulatilakah Pāṇḍudāsa ityādiṣu ⁷⁴³. This information, in corroboration of the evidence of the Paśchimbhāg C.P. of Śrīcandra as well as the reference to Gauḍa - Kāyastha - vaṃśa in the Kinseriyā Inscr. ⁴⁴ dated V.S. 999 proves beyond doubt that the Kāyastha caste had been formed in Bengal by at least 10th century A.D. The epigraphic records outside Bengal, however, show the existence of the caste as early as 9th century A.D. ⁴⁵ We are

42. Vedavyāsa-smṛti, I. 10-11.

43. R.P.Chanda, op. cit., Calcutta, 1969, P. 105.

44. EI. XII, P. 61.

45. Valabha - Kāyasthavaṃśa in Western India, EI. XVIII, P. 251 ; Kāyastha donee in Gurmhā Grant of Jayāditya, V.S. 927, JASB, pt. I (1900), P. 92, ll. 13-14.

informed by some inscriptions that there was a Kāyastha clan named Vāstavya - Kāyastha who lived near Kalanjara in or before the 11th century A.D. and one of these inscriptions states that they followed the profession of a Karaṇa and were known both as Karaṇa and Kāyastha.⁴⁶ Jalhana, who wrote two copper-plate grants of the Gāhaḍavāla king Govindacandra, describes himself as Kāyastha in one⁴⁷ and Karaṇikodgata i.e. born of the family of scribes in the other.⁴⁸ While these inscriptions show the identity of the two castes, in Bengal epigraphs, we get separate mention of two official designations, Mahākāyastha and Mahākaraṇādhyakṣa⁴⁹ or Kāyastha and (Nyāya) Karaṇika⁵⁰. It shows the difference in the nature of functions discharged by these two officials. It appears that the scope of functions discharged by the Kāyastha was wider than that of the Karaṇas or scribes and one of their occupations included that of scribes. Their occupation of a scribe is attested by the evidence of the Gunaighar Inscr. of Vainyagupta ; if we

46. Ajaygarh Rock Inscr. of the Chāḍella Bhojavarman, EI. I, P. 332, VV. 4, 7.

47. EI. IV, P. 104.

48. EI. VIII, P. 153.

49. cf. Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa, CBI., P. 362.

50. cf. Nidhānpur C.P. of Bhāskaravarman, Pl. VII, CPS., P. 22.

accept the reading Sandhi- Vighrahādi - karaṇa - kāyastha to mean a Kāyastha appointed in the post of scribe or Karaṇa in the department of War and Peace. It is not unreasonable to infer from the epigraphic data that the Kāyasthas holding responsible posts in the royal service had been crystalised into a new community and Karaṇas, having similar profession, merged themselves into the bigger community of the Kāyastha. Gradual disappearance of the Karaṇa caste and emergence of the Kāyastha caste at the close of the period under our study seems to suggest the merger of the former into the latter. The pre-eminence of the members of the Kāyastha caste, next to the Brāhmaṇas, still remains a distinctive feature of the society in Bengal. Evidences at our disposal⁵¹ suggest that the Kāyasthas did not originate from a particular traditional caste. Rather they represented an admixture of people belonging to different castes serving in the capacity of royal scribes, accountants and other functionaries. Kāyastha was a functional or occupational caste gradually recognised by official designation.

Vaidya :

The Vaidyas do not seem to have formed a distinct social unit in ancient Bengal at least before the Pāla-Candra period.

51. HAB., P. 434.

The term Vaidya denoting 'physician' was generally associated with the Ambaṣṭhas hailing from South India.⁵² In the Mānavadharmasāstra Ambaṣṭha is a mixed-caste, born of Brāhmaṇa-Vaiśya union, who adopted the profession of a physician [Brāhmaṇadvaiśyakanyāyāmambaṣṭhonāma ucyate ; ... Ambaṣṭhānām cikitsitam |]⁵³.

The earliest epigraphic reference to the Vaidyas in Bengal occurs in the Guṇaighar C.P.⁵⁴ of Vainyagupta which refers to a plot of land owned by a Vaidya marking the boundary of the land donated in favour of the Buddhist monastery [Uttareṇa Vaidyakṣetram, 1-22]. In this case, Vaidya might denote a physician. But instances of individuals known as Vaidya engaged in professions other than that of physicians were not unknown. Thus, the Gayā Inscrs. of the 15th regnal year of Nayapāla and that of the 5th regnal

52. Prof. H.C.Raychaudhury, however, locates the Ambaṣṭhas during 4th century A.D. in the Western Punjab which were formerly a martial tribe, but later on adopted the occupations of agriculturists, physicians, priests etc. being settled in different parts of India. But Ptolemy's Geography (2nd century A.D.) locates the Ambastai i.e. Ambaṣṭhas in South India. So the original habitat of the tribe must be located in some part of South India.

PHAI., P. 255-56.

53. MS., X. 8, 47. ;

54. CBI., P. 67.

year of Vigrahapāla introduce us with Vaidya-Śrī-Vajrapāṇi Vāji-Vaidya (veterinary surgeon) Sahadeva and Vaidya-Śrī-Dharmapāṇi respectively who were all panegyrist of these inscriptions.⁵⁵ On the other hand, we come to learn that during the Pāla-Candra period, the author of Śavda-pradīpa and his ancestors who served as royal physicians introduced themselves as Karaṇas⁵⁶. That the Vaidyas formed a distinct community in Bengal during the 10th century A.D. is evident from their mention in the Paśchimbhāg C.P.⁵⁷ of Śrīcandra. In this record, Vaidya has been mentioned along with Kāyastha and Gaṇaka. From the Bhāṭerā C.P.⁵⁸ of Īśānadeva is known a Vaidya family to which belonged Vanamālikara, minister of Īśānadeva. He is described as Vaidya-vaṃśa-pradīpa (i.e. light of the Vaidya family).

In South India also, we come to know of a Vaidya community the members of which occupied high posts in the State-service. In the Tālamanchi plates⁵⁹ of Vikramāditya Calukya dated A.D. 660, the writer of the record named

55. EI. XXXVI, PP. 84, 89.

56. DI., PP. 269-70.

57. EDEP., P. 68.

58. CPS., P. 186.

59. EI. IX, P. 102.

Vajravarman is said to have belonged to the Vaidya family. Three inscriptions⁶⁰ of the Pāṇḍya King dated 8th century A.D. refer to several Vaidya chiefs who held high offices in the State. The expression Vaidyakula in the inscriptions Nos. i and iii undoubtedly indicates a social group whose members are also referred to as simply Vaidya or Vaidyaka. Dr. D. C. Sircar suggests that these officials of the Vaidya community probably belonged to the present day Ambaṣṭha-Vaidya community of the Deccan who adopted the profession of physician, priest and barber and were known as Ambaṣṭha-Vaidya-Paṇḍita even now⁶¹. In view of close political and cultural contact between Bengal and South India during the Pāla-Sena period, it is not unreasonable to conjecture that these Vaidya officials and Ambaṣṭha-Vaidyas entered into Bengal in the wake of a series of Calukya invasions and

60. (i) The Velvikūḍi Grant of Neḍuñjadaiyān (c.765-81 A.D.), EI. XVII, PP. 291-309 ; (ii) The Madras Museum Plates of Jaṭilavarman, IA. (1893), PP. 57ff ; (iii) Ānāmālāi Inscr. of Marañjadaiyān, dated in Kali era 3871 (=769-70 A.D.), EI. VIII.295, cf. Vaidyakulaśikhāmaṇi referred to in No. i and as Vaidya in No. iii was a great general and Primeminister. No.ii refers to a feudal chief belonging to Vaidya race who was probably the younger brother of the first.

61. D.C.Sircar, Sāṃskṛtik Itihāser Prasāṅga, Pt. I, Calcutta, 138 9 B.S., P. 56.

merged themselves in the Vaidya community of Bengal. This assumption of Dr. Sircar is based upon the evidence of Bhāratamallika's Candraprabhā (1675 A.D.), where the Vaidyas have been styled Ambaṣṭhas. In earlier work Surjanacarita composed by Candraśekhara in the 16th century A.D., the poet who was a Bengali Vaidya, has been described as Gauḍīya Ambaṣṭha i.e. Ambaṣṭha settled in Gauḍa, that is Bengal [Gauḍīyaḥ kila Candrasekhara-kaviryaḥ premapātraṁ satām | Ambaṣṭhānvayamaṇḍanāt kṛtadhiyo jāto jitāmitrataḥ ||]⁶²

The Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa narrates how Ambaṣṭha produced by Brāhmaṇa-Vaiśya union was renamed as Vaidya and given the profession of medical science [Āyurvedastu yo dattastu-bhyamambaṣṭha bhūṣurairḥ |]⁶³. But the Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa distinguishes the Vaidya caste from the Ambaṣṭha and tells us that the progenitor of the Vaidya caste was born of a Brahmin wife by Aśvinikumāra and was taught medical science along with other arts by Aśvinikumāra [Putraṁ cikitsāśāstraṇca pāṭhayāmāsa yatnataḥ | Nāmnā śilpaṇca śāstraṇca svayaṁ sa Ravi-nandanah ||]⁶⁴. The mythical account points to the Southern origin of the Vaidyas on the bank of the Godāvarī

62. IHQ. XIV (1933), P. 579.

63. BRDP. III. XIV. 45.

64. BRVP. I. X. 123.

river. It is interesting to note that there was a Vaidya community styled Panditas in the Ganjam district in Orissa, not very far from the Godāvarī Valley.⁶⁵ It is not unlikely that the Purānic account has traced the origin of the Vaidyas of Bengal to the Vaidya community of Orissa and, that is why, distinguishes it from the Ambaṣṭha. The Vaidya Pandits of Orissa might have connection with the Ambaṣṭha-Vaidya of the Tamil land who had similar kind of profession. A section of South Indian Ambaṣṭha-Vaidya-Pandita might have settled in Orissa and merged into the Vaidya community of that country. Another section might have immigrated into Bengal and came to be known as Ambaṣṭha-Vaidyas after their merger with the indigenous Vaidya community of Bengal. In all likelihood two waves of migrations of the Vaidyas, one from Orissa and the other from Tamil country, contributed to the growth of gradual recognition as a distinct caste. The identity of Vaidya and Ambaṣṭha has been generally accepted in medieval Bengal. But what appears from the literary and epigraphic records hardly suggests that the Vaidyas strictly formed a professional class of physicians, as they are found to have adopted various occupations from time to time.

65. D.C.Sircar, op. cit., P. 60.

Kaivarta :

The earliest historical reference to the Kaivartas in Bengal is found during the Pala period. Sandhy^ākaranandi's Rāmacaritam informs us of the revolt made by the Kaivartas of Varendrī under the leadership of Divya who was probably an important official under Mahīpāla II. Divya snatched away Varendrī from Mahīpāla II and established Kaivarta rule over there. We get the names of three Kaivarta chiefs, namely, Divya, Rudoka and Bhīma ruling over Varendrī. It is this political upheaval in the Pāla kingdom that highlighted the importance of the Kaivarta caste in the social history of Bengal. Reference is made to the village of the Kaivartas (Osinna-Kaivartavṛtti) in the Belwā C.P.⁶⁶ of Mahīpāla I. (This village was donated to a Brāhmaṇa donee named Jīva-dharadevaśarman). In the Manusāṃhitā (X 34), Kaivarta is referred to as an alternative name of Mārgava or Dāsa who is born of a Niṣāda father and an Āyogava mother and subsists on the occupation of a boatman [Niṣādo Mārgavaṃ sute dāsaṃ naukarmajīvinam | Kaivartamiti yaṃ Prāhurāryāvartanivāsi- naḥ || ⁶⁷ In the Viṣṇu Purāṇa Kaivartas are described as 'abrahmanya', i.e. outside the pale of Brāhmanical culture.

66. EI. XXIX, P. 6.

67. MS. X. 34.

The word Kaivarta or Kevartta seems to be Sanskritized form of the word Kevaṭṭa (fisherman) mentioned in the Jātakas,⁶⁸ or Kewat which was probably the name of an aboriginal tribe. The word is derived from the word 'ka' meaning water (Ka - vṛt + ac - an)⁶⁹. From a tribal name it seems to have become the name of a functional caste. They were reduced to the lowest stratum of the society, as they still held the primitive way of life dependent on food - gathering, that is, fishing and hunting. According to the Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa, Kaivarta is born of Kṣatriya father and Vaiśya mother, but the text seems to imply that the Kaivartas were degraded in the Kali Age by his association with the Tīvara and was known to have adopted the vocation of a Dhīvara or fisherman [Kṣatravīryeṇa Vaiśyānām Kaivartaḥ Parikīrtitaḥ | Kalau Tīvarasaṃsargāt Dhīvaraḥ Patito bhuvi]⁷⁰. In the Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa, we find reference to Dhīvara instead of Kaivarta as an offspring of Gopa and Śūdra, belonging to the Madhyama saṃkara group. Jālika mentioned in the said Purāṇa may correspond to either fisherman or bird - hunter. As it has been

68. Richard Fick, Social Organisation of North Eastern India in Buddha's time, Tr. by S.R.Mitra, Calcutta, 1920, P. 302.

69. N.K.Dutt, Origin and Growth of Caste in India, Vol. II, Calcutta, 1969, P. 133.

70. BRVP. I. X. 111 - 112.

already noted, Bhavadevabhaṭṭa describes the Kaivarta caste as one of the seven antyajas. The Amarakoṣa identifies Dāsa (boatman) and Dhīvara with Kaivarta. In the lexicon is reflected the data culled from the Manusamhitā and the Jātakas taken together. In the Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa, however, Dāsa denotes cultivator and belongs to the Uttama Saṁkara group, while Dhīvara belongs to the Madhyamasamkara group. Taking together the account of the Amarakoṣa and the Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa we may classify the Kaivarta caste into two sections, namely, Cāṣā - Kaivarta and Jālika Kaivarta of late date. The former seems to have evolved from the Dāsa caste that preferred cultivation to boating, while the latter was most probably the descendant of the Dhīvara caste.

The Cāṣā Kaivartas⁷¹ nowadays call themselves Māhiṣya and differentiate themselves from the Jālika Kaivarta. But there is no ground for such distinction in the absence of any authentic evidence regarding their difference in origin. Their identification with Māhiṣya is based on the ground that in the law - books of Gautama (ch.IV), Manu (ch.X) and Yājñavalkya (I.92) the union of a Kṣatriya male and a Vaiśya female produces Māhiṣya and in the Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa the same union produces Kaivarta. But the discrepant account

71. N.K.Dutt, op. cit., P. 127ff.

regarding the origin of different castes, as contained in the Smṛtis and the Purāṇas, cannot always be held as a standard for such identification. The Smṛti accounts in different texts about castes are found to be at variance with each other presumably to cope with the demands of time and place. Further, the traditional professions of the Māhiṣyas, namely, singing, dancing, star - reading and protection of crops,⁷² do not tally with those of Cāṣā-Kaivartas in Bengal. In the Dharmaśāstras and Purāṇas, the two words, Māhiṣya and Kaivarta are never used as synonymous terms. Rather, the latter is identical with Dhīvara. Besides, the development of Māhiṣya caste is a comparatively recent phenomenon in the society of Bengal which may hardly be traced even in the Purāṇas dated 14th century A.D., or in the epigraphic records of Bengal. It, therefore, appears that the section of Kaivartas reaching the food - producing stage and adopting agriculture as their occupation came to be distinguished from the section which still remained at the food - gathering stage and depended for their livelihood on fishing and hunting.

72. Kulluka on Manu X. 6.

Trading Castes :

Traders and bankers formed influential corporations or guilds, as we come to know from Manu, Yājñavalkya, Nārada and other law - givers. Their power was based on their wealth, and the privileges they enjoyed were conferred on them in return for the financial assistance often extended by them to the king. Their influence in the state-administration was exhibited, as early as the 5th century A.D., by the reference to Nagaraśreṣṭhī, i.e., President of the guild of merchants and Sārthavāha i.e., representative of the guild of traders⁷³ in the Gupta epigraphs. Vyāpāraṇḍya or Vyāpāra-kāraṇḍya⁷⁴ meaning 'customs-officer' as well as 'Pradhāna-vyāpārīnaḥ'⁷⁵ i.e., chief merchants are referred to in the Faridpur grant of the 6th century A.D. There are a few references to the merchants in the Pāla epigraphs which record the gift of the images of deities by the members of that community. The Kurkihār Bronze Inscr.⁷⁶ (no. 21) (9th century A.D.) refers to a merchant named Māṇeka. In

73. CBI. PP. 45, 47, 62, 71.

74. cf. Faridpur c.p.s of Gopacandra and Dharmāditya,
Ibid., PP. 83, 80.

75. cf. Faridpur c.p. of Gopacandra, Ibid., P. 84.

76. JBORS. XXVI, P. 236ff.

the Māndhuk Inscr.⁷⁷ of Gopāla II, the trader (Sārthavāha) Jambhalamitra is said to have made a gift of an image of the Buddha. Two Image inscriptions of the time of Mahipāla I, the Bhāgaūrā Nārāyaṇa Image Inscr.⁷⁸ and the Nārāyaṇapur Image Inscr.⁷⁹ record installation of the images of god Nārāyaṇa and the Buddhist god Vināyaka by merchants Lokadatta and Buddhamitra respectively, both of whom were inhabitants of Samatāṭa. Buddhamitra is said to be the son of merchant Jambhalamitra. The records thus testify to the existence of merchant - families in Samatāṭa region during the 10th century A.D. The Chandimau Inscr.⁸⁰ of Rāmapāla introduces us with a merchant named Sādhu Saharaṇa who had made a gift of the image of the Buddha. Buddhistic names like Jambhalamitra and Buddhamitra assumed by the merchants, gift of Buddhist images made by them and observance of Buddhist creed by them indicate that a section of the mercantile community had a predilection for Buddhism. It is difficult to ascertain whether the Vanīks upheld the cause of Buddhism to challenge the undisputed supremacy of the Brahmins in the "Cāturvarṇya" system of social order.

77. IHQ. XXVIII, P.51.

78. EI. XVII, P.353.

79. IC. IX, P.121.

80. MASB. V, PP. 93 - 94.

Vaṇiks or traders formed a few castes in Bengal namely Suvarṇavaṇik, Gandhavaṇik, Kāmsyavaṇik, Śaṅkhavaṇik etc. by the close of the ancient period, as it is evident from the lists of mixed - castes occurring in the Bṛhaddharma and the Brahmavaivarta Purāṇas. These Purāṇas, however, specifically include only two trading castes, Suvarṇavaṇik and Gandhavaṇik, while other caste - divisions of the traders may be reasonably inferred from the references to Śaṅkhika and Kāmsyakāra. It is evident from the Purāṇas that Suvarṇavaṇik was degraded to the rank of Madhyama Saṁkara or Asat-Śūdra, while the other castes belonging to the trading community are raised to the status of Uttama Saṁkara or Sat-Śūdra. The comparatively lower status assigned to the Suvarṇavaṇik excluded it from the Navaśākhā or nine clean Śūdra castes. The tradition about the loss of status by the said caste is associated with the reign of Vallālasena.⁸¹ Ānandabhaṭṭa's Vallālacarita records that the Suvarṇavaṇiks lost their prestigious status, when they refused to lend money to Vallālasena who often pressed for loans of exorbitant sums. In default of independent testimony to the accuracy of the tradition, we cannot attach much historical value to this account. But it appears from the epigraphic data that the

81. H.H.Risley, The Tribes and Castes of Bengal, Vol. II, Calcutta, 1981, P. 262.

power and prestige of the mercantile community in general suffered decline from the eighth century onward. The state - recognition which was extended to the community during the Gupta and Post-Gupta period was gradually withdrawn during the Pāla period. Significantly enough, the Vaniks, Śreṣṭhins, Sārthavāhas or Vyāpārins are conspicuous by their absence in the epigraphs of the Pāla - Sena period. The check on the progress of trade and commerce due to emphasis on agrarian economy might have caused the withdrawal of State - recognition to the traders and merchants who had, by that time, lost relevance to the contemporary rural and social economy.

Artisan Castes :

Prathama - Kulika, "Chief of the artisans", referred to in the Dāmodarpur Copper Plates,⁸² was one of the four members of the office of the District Advisory Board, having his voice in the district-administration. The artisans belonged to the occupational castes, specialising in various arts and Crafts and catering to the material needs of the society. Some of the epigraphs of Bengal directly refer to such occupational castes. The existence of artisan castes may also be derived from the incidental references to significant localities or to some

82. CBI., PP. 45,47,62,71.

manufactured goods meant for daily use.

Karmakāra (blacksmith) :

The Karmakāra caste finds mention for the first time in the Kurkihār Bronze Inscr.⁸³ of Rajyapāla where the blacksmith named Maṅgane is said to have made gift of an image of the Buddha [Devadharmo ayaṁ Maṅgane-karmakāra]. Again, reference to the caste is found in the Paśchimbhāg C.P. of Śrīcandra (10th century A.D.) which records allotment of land to the members of various castes attached to different religious maṭhas established in Śrīhaṭṭa (Harikela) region during the 10th century A.D. Besides, the existence of this caste throughout Bengal may be easily inferred, as they supplied essential commodities made of iron, such as weapons often required by the royal army or agricultural implements the cultivators needed or utensils for domestic use. In the Brhaddharma Purāṇa, Karmakāra who is born of Pratiloma union between Śūdra male and Vaiśya female belongs to the Uttama - Saṁkara category, while the Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa assigns to the caste the position of Sat-Śūdra.

83. JBORS. XXVI, 1.236.

Kumbhakāra (potter) :

Direct reference to the Kumbhakāra caste is first found in the Nidhānpur C.P.⁸⁴ of Bhāskaravarman (last plate) where the pit of the potter forms the north - western boundary of the donated land. Existence of the caste in southern Bengal is attested by the reference to the village named Kumbhārapadraka in the Midnāpore C.P.⁸⁵ of the time of Śaśāṅka, indicating that the potters' industry was localised in a village of that name. In the Paśchimbhāg C.P. of Śrīcandra, plots of land are found to be allotted to two potters who were attached to the maṭha of Brahmā. The epigraphic evidence thus leaves no doubt that Kumbhakāra in ancient Bengal was a recognised artisan - caste but for whom earthen objects for daily use and terracottas serving both aesthetic and religious purposes would not have been supplied. According to the Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa, Kumbhakāra, an offspring of a Brāhmaṇa father and a Kṣatriya mother, belongs to the Uttama Saṃkara group, while in the Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa, Kumbhakāra, an offspring of a Brāhmaṇa father and a Vaiśya mother, is assigned the status of Sat-Śūdra. This is one of the good Śūdra castes grouped under Navaśākhā.

84. CPS. P. 22.

85. JRASBL. XI, p. 1ff.

Kāmsyakāra (Bellmetal-worker) :

The earliest reference to the caste is found in the Nālandā C.P.⁸⁶ of Dharmapāla in the context of issuing a land - grant charter. The function of Kāmsyakāra in this record remains implied. It was likely that service of the Kāmsyakāra was requisitioned to manufacture the copper - plates and make them ready in half - molten condition immediately before recording on them the royal charters recording donation of lands. In the Maināmatī Plate⁸⁷ (no. 2) of Laḍahacandra mention is made of the village Kāmsāraka-ddapolaka (in Samatāṭa region) as marking the northern boundary of the donated land. As the name of the village suggests, it might have been the locality where the industry of bell-metal workers was localised. The existence of the caste in Śrīhaṭṭa region sometime in the 12th century A.D. is proved by the evidence of Bhāṭerā C.P. of Govindakeśavadeva. In the Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa , Kāmsyakāra, born of Brāhmaṇa father and Vaiśya mother, belongs to Uttamasāṃkara group, while in the Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa the caste is designated Sat-Śūdra.

86. EI. XXIII, P. 290.

87. EDEP. P. 75.

Śāṅkhika (Worker and dealer in conch-shell) :

That the Śāṅkhika or Śāṅkhakāra caste existed in ancient Bengal may be inferred from the mention of Śāṅkha-vādaka (conchshell - blower) in the Paśchimbhāg C.P.⁸⁸ of Śrīcandra. The grant records allotment of 1/2 pāṭaka of land to each of the two Śāṅkhavādakas attending upon the temple of Brahmā. Usually, Śāṅkhakāra manufactured articles made of shell for religious purpose as well as bangles for the use by women as ornaments. In the Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa the Śāṅkhika is described as born of Brāhmaṇa-Vaiśya (anuloma) union and placed in the Uttama Saṅkara grade. The caste is designated as Sat-Śūdra in the Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa. Later tradition ascribes the origin of the caste, as of the goldsmiths, jewellers and Kānsāris, to one Dhanapati Saudāgara of Karṇāṭa from whose third son, Śrikānta, the Śāṅkhāris believe themselves^{to} have been descended.⁸⁹ The southern origin of the caste may be explained by the fact that the Tamil craftsmen and merchants made use of various kinds of shells to manufacture goods for exporting to the countries in and outside India.⁹⁰ In fact, in medieval Bengali literature, the

88. Ibid., P. 67.

89. H.H.Risely, op. cit., II, P. 221.

90. A.N.Bose, op. cit., P. 273.

Śaṅkhavanīks came to be recognised as one of the mercantile communities.

Svarṇakāra (Goldsmith) :

Svarṇakāra or goldsmith finds mention in the Kurkihār Bronze Image Inscr. of the time of Mahīpāla I and the Bihar Image Inscr.⁹¹ of Vigrahapāla III. In both the records the goldsmiths named Keśava and Daiheka are said to have made gifts of images of the Buddha. The goldsmiths seem to have settled in the town where they might cater to the needs of fashion and luxury. Epigraphic and literary references⁹² to gold - ornaments, gold - made things used by richer people and palaces with gold - decorations indicate to what extent the Svarṇakāras specialised in their industry. The Śārvāṇī Image Inscr.⁹³ of the time of Devakhaḍga (7th century A.D.) gives us to understand that the image of goddess Śārvāṇī was gilt with golden leaves by the order of Devakhaḍga's wife Queen Prabhāvatī. The Brhaddharma Purāṇa describes the Svarṇakāra as born of Ambaṣṭha father and Vaiśya mother and includes it in the Madhyama Saṃkara group. But the Brahma -

91. JBORS. XXVI, P.35ff.

92. cf. Deopārā Inscr. of Vijayasena, CBI., P. 248, Irdā C.P.
of Nayapāla, EI. XXII, P.150ff; RC. III. 32 - 37.

93. EI. XVII, P.357.

vaivarta Purāṇa degrades the caste from the position of Sat-Śūdra to that of Asat-Śūdra as a punishment, according to tradition, for theft of gold. In both the Purāṇas, the caste of goldsmiths is distinguished from that of Suvarṇa-vaṇik (bullion-merchant) although their origin and social status seem to be the same. This distinction is still retained in Bengal.

The existence of bullion-merchants, in ancient Bengal seems to be confirmed by the fact that the industry of Svarṇakāra was entirely dependent upon the import of gold from countries outside Bengal, especially Assam. In the Maṅgalkāvyas of medieval Bengal, the Suvarṇa Vaṇika are accorded an esteemed position in the society. Suvarṇa-vaṇiks traditionally claim themselves to be the descendants of ancient Vaiśya community and trace their original home in Oudh wherefrom their ancestors are said to have come to Bengal during the reign of Ādiśūra who, being struck by their financial ability, conferred on them the title of Suvarṇavaṇik as a mark of his favour⁹⁴. While Svarṇakāras are divided into four sub-castes, namely, Brāhmaṇdeśī, Dakhin-Rārhi, Khatangi and Uttar-Rārhi, Suvarṇavaṇiks are

94. H. H. Risley, op. cit., II, P. 261.

said to have belonged to four sub-castes, namely, Vaṅga, Dakhin-Rārhi, Uttar-Rārhi and Saptagrāmi⁹⁵.

Mālākāra (Florist) :

Mālākāra or florist finds mention in the Paśchimbhāg C.P. of Śrīcandra where members of the caste attached to the maṭhas of Brahmā and Maheśvara were allotted half pāṭaka of land for their livelihood. As suggested by the record in question, the Mālākāra were, more often than not, attached with some religious institutions. The richer people living in towns and cities also needed their services on festive occasions. Besides, as it is learnt from Vātsyāyana's Kāma-sūtra, the luxury of a nāgaraka was wearing garlands in the evening. Mālākāra, according to the Br̥haddharma Purāṇa, was the offspring of pratiloma union of Kṣatriya male and Brāhmaṇa female and ranked in the Uttama-Saṃkara group. In the Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa, the caste is said to have been born of the union between Viśvakarman and a Śūdra woman and is designated as Sat-Śūdra. The caste was later included in the Naśākṣhā group in Bengal and its members traditionally trace their mythical origin from the garland-makers attached to the household of Rājā Kāṃsa of Mathura⁹⁶. Mālākāras in

95. Ibid. PP. 239, 262.

96. Ibid., P. 60.

Bengal were later divided into two main groups, the Phulkāṭā-mālī who used to make ornaments, toys etc. from the pith of the 'śolā' and the 'Dokāṇe-mālī' who used to keep shops. The former group was again divided into Rārhi, Vārendra and Āthghariā (descended from eight families).

Śilpin : Sūtradhāra - Takṣan : (carpenter, wood worker) :

The Pāla epigraphs are often found to have ended with the name of a Sūtradhāra who was generally responsible the records. The Nālandā Inscr. of Dharmapāla refers to a Sūtradhāra who engraved the said copper-plate. The name of the engraver is, however, not found. A Sūtradhāra named Viṣṇubhadra is found in the Bādal Pillar Inscr.⁹⁷ of Nārāyaṇapāla who is said to have engraved on the Garuḍa pillar the eulogy of the family of Brahmin ministers of the Pāla emperors. The Bhāgalpur Grant⁹⁸ of the same ruler mentions the engraver Maṅkhaḍāsa, a native of Samatāṭa. But he is not introduced as a Sūtradhāra. In the Bhāturiyā Grant⁹⁹ of Rājyapāla, Nidhāna, the engraver has been referred to as Śilpin. In the

97. CBI. P. 155.

98. Ibid. P. 169.

99. EI. XXXIII, P. 150.

Jājilpādā Grant¹⁰⁰ of Gopāla II, the engraver Prthivīdeva is also styled Śilpin hailing from the village Tinniḍi. In the Belwā C.P.¹⁰¹ of Mahīpāla I, the engraver Puṣyāditya, son of Candrāditya, has been styled Śilpin. In the Bāngad C.P.¹⁰² of Mahīpāla I, we find reference to another engraver named Mahīdhara hailing from Poṣāli.

The Gayā Stone Inscr.¹⁰³ of Nayapāla refers to an engraver named Saṭṭasoma styled Śilpin. An engraver named Śaśīdeva hailing from Poṣāli finds mention in the Āngāchi and Bangāon Copper plates¹⁰⁴ of Vigrahapāla III. The Deopārā Inscr. of Vijayasena was engraved by Rāṇaka Śūlapāṇi who was the crest - jewel of the guild of artists of Varendrī [Cakhāna Vārendraka-Śilpigoṣṭhicūḍāmaṇi Rāṇakah Śūlapāṇiḥ]¹⁰⁵. It appears from the epigraphic evidence that the terms Sūtradhāra and Śilpin were used in the same sense to denote an engraver. It remains true, however, that the two terms could have been used separately to denote some specialised arts and crafts. The term in the Paśchimbhāg C.P. of Śrīcandra seems

100. JAS. XVII, P. 137ff.

101. EI. XXIX, P. 6.

102. CBI. P. 204.

103. Ibid. P. 145.

104. EI. XV, P. 295ff. ; EI. XXIX, P. 48ff.

105. CBI. P. 249.

to have been used in the sense of a carpenter. Manufacturing furniture, chariot - making and ship-building were considered to have been within the purview of his trade and he used to have considerable skill in wood-engraving. Epigraphic records occasionally refer to nauvāṭaka, nauvitāna (fleet for warfare), nāvātākṣeṇī¹⁰⁶ (ship-building harbour) etc, the terms which presuppose flourishing ship-building industry. In addition to the wood-craft, the occupation of Sūtradhāra as engravers of copper-plate charters or stone inscription tends to show that not only in wood-craft, but in any kind of engraving work he was supposed to be a skilled artisan. The Pāli literature (Jātakas) throws much light on the house-building craft of the vaddhaki (carpenter) who build houses of wood¹⁰⁷.

The Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa mentions the caste named Takṣan (Karaṇa + Vaiśya) instead of Sūtradhāra and includes it in the Madhyamasamkara group. The Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa, on the otherhand, assigns Sūtradhāra the Asat-Śūdra status. There is little scope of doubt that the position of Sūtradhāra was equivalent to that of Takṣan. Śilpin stood for engraver,

106. Ibid. PP. 98, 76.

107. A. N. Bose, op. cit., P. 246.

sculptor and architect. Mention is made of a Śilābhīd denoting sculptor or stone-cutter in the Mahābodhi Inscr.¹⁰⁸ of Dharmapāla. The sculptor Keśava is said to have carved out the phallus of Caturmukha Śiva. Varendrī was a flourishing centre of art and craft during the Pāla period that witnessed the development of Gauḍīya style in art and sculpture. Two prominent sculptors of the Pāla period named Dhīmān and Viṭpāla belonged to Varendrī school and seem to have developed the Eastern school of art.¹⁰⁹ Rāṇaka Śūlapāṇi, as pointed out above, was the foremost artist belonging to the Vārendra school of art during the reign of Vijayasena.

Sthapati :

In the epigraphs of Bengal, we find specific reference to Sthapati or Horāsthapati. Horā-sthapati finds mention in the Kurkihār Bronze Inscr. of the time of Rājyapāla where the architect is found to have cast the images of the Buddha gifted by the wives of Gopālahino in the Āpaṇaka monastery. The word 'horaka' occurring in the Mathurā Lion Capital Inscr.¹¹⁰ has been explained by Dr. D. C. Sircar as equivalent

108. CBI. P. 112.

109. Tāranātha : History of Buddhism in India (tr.),
IA. IV. 102 ; A. K. Maitra, Gauḍarājamāla, Introduction,
P. IV.

110. SI. Vol. I, P. 113.

to horaka i.e. women. In any case Horā-sthapati seems to signify the architect appointed by women-donor. Two architects attached to the maṭha of Brahmā had been allotted two pāṭakas of land each, as it is recorded in the Paśchimbhāg C.P. of Śricandra.

The occupation of architect also included that of carpenter (sūtradhāra)¹¹¹ engaged in house-building but the reference to Sthapati side by side with Sūtradhāra in the above record distinguishes the former from the latter. Sthapati seems to denote an architect skilled in planning and building of houses or mason actually engaged in building temple, monastery and other mansions. The treatises on Vāstuvīdyā and Śilpaśāstra often ascribe a high status to the Sthapatis claiming their descent from divine architects like Viśvakarman, Maya and Tvaṣṭṛ, the expounders of the science of architecture. It is learnt from the Jātakas that Sthapati was skilled in divining good sites [Vatthuvijjā-cariyo, II. 297, IV. 324]. In the Mahābhārata, Sthapati is said to be a Sūta by caste, well-acquainted with the Purāṇas [- sthapatirbuddhisampanno vāstuvīdyā - viśāradaḥ / Ityabrabit sūtradhāraḥ sūtaḥ Paurāṇikastadā || I. 51. 15]. The Sthapati mentioned in the Paśchimbhāg C.P. seems to have

111. A. N. Bose, op. cit., P. 249.

belonged to the Sūta caste of the Uttamasamkara category mentioned in the Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa. Sūta is said to have been an offspring of pratiloma union of Kṣatriya male and Brāhmaṇa female. Again, Sūta denotes a court-bard. But a separate mention of Māgadha (court-bard) [cf. Vandī bhava ca mahāmate Stutipāṭhi]¹¹² distinguished him from Sūta who was, in all probability, a representative of the architect class. In the Brahmavaivarta, however, we get two classes of architects, namely, Aṭṭālikākāra (builder of large mansions) and Koṭaka (builder of sheds and huts). The Purāṇas also derive different origins of the two castes. The former is the offspring of Citrakāra father and Śūdra mother and the latter of Sthapati father and Kumbhakāra mother. Aṭṭālikākāra may correspond to the Sūta of the Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa in the sense of Sthapati or architect, although the status of the latter seems to have been higher than the former. In the Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa, Sūta is ranked with the Uttama Samkara castes, whereas Aṭṭālikākāra is placed in the Asat-Śūdra category according to the Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa.

If we attach any importance to the quantum of land provided for the maintenance of different occupational caste-people in a 10th century record, it would appear that

112. BRDP. III. XIV. 53.

Sthapati, Sūtradhāra and Karmakāra were at par with each other so far as their socio-economic status is concerned. In the Paśchimbhāg C.P. of Śrīcandra, each of them is found to be allotted two pāṭakas of land. However, for reasons unknown, the position of Śūtradhāra or Takṣan suffered a decline at a late period as suggested by the Purānic evidence.

Jeweller and ivory-worker :

We often find mention of ornaments with precious stone in the epigraphic records and literary texts of the period. The skill of jewellers was naturally demanded to make those jewelled ornaments in set patterns. Ivory-worker (dantakāra) is referred in the Bhāṭerā C.P. of Govinda Keśava¹¹³. Dantakāra Vajari is mentioned in connection with the donation of one of his cowsheds in favour of Lord Śiva in Śrīhaṭṭa region. The ivoryworker, like the jeweller, is specialised in carving ornaments and luxury objects out of ivory. In a wider sense, the jewellers and ivory-workers could be compared to Śilpin, an engraver par excellence.

113. CPS. P. 161.

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Tantuvāya (Weaver) :

Epigraphic records of Bengal do not refer to Tantuvāya as a caste. But its existence in the region from remote antiquity may be traced from the reputation of Bengal in textile industry. According to the Periplus of the Erythrean Sea, the finest sort of muslins produced by the spinners and weavers of Bengal were brought down to Tāmralipti for export. Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra gives a list of varieties of clothes manufactured, namely Vaṅgoka dukula (white and soft fabric made in Vaṅga), Paṇḍraka (black soft silk manufactured in Pundra), Patrorṇa (fibrous garments) of Paṇḍra and Kārpāṣika (cotton fabrics)¹¹⁴. The rich tradition of weaving in Bengal seems to have been handed down from generation to generation till the Pāla-Sena period. From the epigraphs we definitely come to know of the ruling class, generally settled in district and provincial head-quarters and capital-towns. As they were in need of fine dress in conformity with their position, they seem to have encouraged the weaving industry and patronised the guild of weavers (Tantuvāyas). The Rāmacarita (III. 35, 37) gives a description of the garments worn by city-damsels. In the Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa, Tantuvāya, an offspring of Brāhmaṇa - Kṣatriya union, is included in

114. AŚ.I, Bk. II. XI, P. 44-45.

the Uttama-Saṁkara group, while Kuvindaka corresponding to Tantuvāya is grouped in the Sat-Śūdra category of Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa.

Carmakāra (leather-worker) :

The Paśchimbhāg C.P. of Śrīcandra refers to some Carmakāras. Being attached to the religious establishments for rendering service, they were allotted 1/2 pāṭaka of land each. The Brhaddharma Purāṇa describes the caste as born of Takṣan father and Vaiśya mother and ranks it along with the Adhama-Saṁkara group. In the Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa, Carmakāra is given the status of Asat-śūdra but not that of an Antyaja.

Naṭa (Dancer or Actor) :

In the Paśchimbhāg C.P. of Śrīcandra, Naṭa is attached with the monastery of Brahman and allotted 2 pāṭakas of land as remuneration of his service rendered to the religious institution. The performing art of a Naṭa appears to have been of immense value in giving out religious precepts through entertainment. In the Brhaddharma Purāṇa, Naṭa, an offspring of the union between Mālākāra male and Śūdra female, is included in the Madhyama-

Śaṅkara category. In Bhavadevabhāṭṭa's Prāyāścittapra-
karaṇam,¹¹⁵ Naṭa is included in the list of seven degraded
castes or Antyajās. But in the 10th century A.D. to which
the said land-grant record has been assigned, the position
of Naṭa was not reduced to such a low status. Naṭa like
Sūtradhāra, Sthapati, and Karmakāra is found to be allotted
two pāṭakas of land by the Paśchimbhāg C.P. Grant.

Conchshell-blower and drummers:

The Paśchimbhāg C.P. enumerates different types of
drummers who, being accompanied by conchshell-blowers
(Saṅkha-vādaka), appear to have performed their duties on
the occasion of worship in a temple. The drummers were
Kāhalikas (players on the drum called kaḥala), ḍhakkā-
vādakas (players on the big drum called ḍhakkā) and Drāga-
ḍikas (players on the kettle drum). All the Vādakas (player),
either of drums or of conchshells, were allotted 1/2 pāṭaka
of land each. Their status seems to have been the same as
that of Mālākāra, Kumbhakāra, Tailika with whom they received
equal allotment of land as remuneration for rendering service
to the temple.

115. PRP. P. 94.

Tailika (Oilman) :

The position of the Tailika caste in the Paśchimbhāg C.P. deserves our consideration separately. In the Viṣṇusmṛti (LI) and the Manusāṃhitā (III. 158) Tailika is represented as one of the degraded communities, whose food could not be taken by a Brāhmaṇa. Kulluka, commenting on a verse in the Manusāṃhitā, suggests that Tailika was an oil-presser [Tailārthaṃ tilādivījānāṃ peṣṭā]. Sir M. M. Williams¹¹⁶ also suggests the same meaning on the basis of early authorities. But the Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa ascribes to the Tailika the occupation of selling betel-nut [Tailike hyakarodājñāṃ guvākavikraye khalu]¹¹⁷ and distinguishes the caste from Tailakāraka (oil-presser). The Purāṇa also raises the status of the former by ranking it with the Uttama-saṃkara group, while it relegates the status of the Tailakāraka to Madhyama Saṃkara category. The former is the offspring of Vaiśya-Śūdra union and the latter of Gopa-Vaiśya union. The Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa refers only to Tailakāra and enlists the caste in the Asat-Śūdra category.

116. Sir M. M. Williams, Sanskrit English Dictionary, Delhi, 1979, P. 455.

117. BRDP. III. XIV. 59.

It appears from the available data that the Tailika was originally an 'oil-presser' by profession. Later, Tailikas abandoned the traditional occupation which fell in estimation. It is reasonable to hold that the Tailikas become dealers in tila or sesame-seed from which oil was extracted and Tailakāras remained 'oil-extractors'. But it is difficult to surmise how the trade in betel-nut came to be adopted as the occupation of Tailika by the time of the Brhaddharma-Purāṇa. The Tailikas gradually extended their field of business and adopted trading in various articles other than sesame-seed (tila). At present, Tilis, distinguished from Telis (oil-extractors), form a class belonging to the Navaśākhā group in Bengal. Tilis have earned prosperity by their commercial activities.

Menial Castes :

The menials formed the lowest rung of the society, although they are supposed to render the essential services. Rajaka, Nāpita, Gopa, Nāvika, Cetīkā etc. were some of the menial castes recognised in the epigraphs and literature in ancient Bengal.

Nāpita (Barber) :

The Paśchimbhāg C.P. of Śrīcandra records grant of 1/2 pāṭaka of land to each of the barbers (Nāpitas) attached to

various religious establishments in Śrīhaṭṭa region. The Bhāṭerā C.P. of Govinda Keśavadeva informs us that the house of barber Govinda was givenaway in favour of Lord Śiva. Nāpita, an offspring of Kṣatriya father and Śūdra mother, belongs to the Uttama Saṁkara group of the Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa and Asat-Śūdra group of Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa. The social status of the barber-caste seems to have been higher, as the barber's services were deemed essential in religious sacraments recommended by the Smṛtis, as it is indicated in the Paśchimbhāg C.P. But, from the point of view of a religious establishment, their position was equivalent to that Rajaka, Tailika, Carmakāra etc. whose socio-economic status seems to have been lower than that of Sūtradhāra, Karmakāra etc. At present, the Nāpita-caste is brought under the Navaśākhā group of castes.

Rajaka (Washerman) :

The Paśchimbhāg C.P. informs us that washermen (Rajakas), being attached to different maṭhas, rendered their services and received the share of 1/2 pāṭaka of land each as remuneration. The Bhāṭerā C.P. of Govinda Keśavadeva also refers to a few washermen (Rajakas) whose houses were dedicated to Lord Śiva (Śrīhaṭṭanātha). Manu describes Rajaka as degraded (III. 158). In Bhavadevabhaṭṭa's Prāyaścittaprakaraṇam, both Rajaka and Nāpita have been described as Antyajas or degraded

castes. Rajaka, an offspring of Karaṇa-Vaiśya union, is included in the Madhyama Saṁkara (BRDP: 2.) and Asat-Śūdra (BRDP: 2.) category.

The epigraphic records seem to suggest the same status of Nāpita and Rajaka, as they are associated together and given equal share of land-grant as remuneration. At present a section of the Rajaka-caste is found to have given up their traditional occupation and taken to agriculture. They call themselves Cāṣādhobās and distinguish themselves from the inferior caste of ordinary Dhobās (washerman).

Cetīkā (Maid-servant) :

As it is learnt from the Paśchimbhāg C.P. of Śrīcandra, Cetīkā rendering menial service to the maṭhas, were allotted 1/2 pāṭaka of land each for their maintenance. Dr. D.C. Sircar is of opinion that Cetīkās might have served the temples in the capacity of Devadāsī¹¹⁸ who seem to have been recruited from among the degraded Śūdra castes.

Nāvika (Ferryman) :

Nāvika finds mention in the Bhāṭerā C.P. of Govinda Keśavadeva. Nāvika seems to be a functional class living on

118. EDEP., P. 32.

the occupation of boatman. The locality where the grant was made abounded in water - streams, river and channels. The services of the Navikas were, therefore, essential. The caste seems to have been the descendant of the Kaivarta caste which adopted originally boating along with fishing as their occupation. Different branches of the Kaivarta caste are known as Cāṣā-Kaivarta, (Dāsa of the BRDP.), Jāliā-Kaivarta (Dhivara) and Pāṭni (ferryman).

Gopa (Cattle-rearer, milk-man) :

In the Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla, the Gopas are described as singing the praise of King Dharmapāla [Gopaiḥ sīmni.23]. In the Bhāṭerā C.P. of Govinda Keśavadeva, houses of some Gopas are found to have been donated to Lord Śiva. Gopa in Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra stands for 'a royal official in charge of five or ten villages'¹¹⁹. As an assistant of Samāhartā (collector-General), Gopa used to maintain the village-gazetters with the purpose of assessment of taxes. Presumably, he used to keep written records and documents. The relevant line of the Khalimpur C.P. Inscr. (1.23) of Dharmapāla suggests that the Gopas generally

119. AŚ.M.I., BK. II. XXXV, P. 80.

resided on the border of the village. The Gomārga¹²⁰ or Govāṭa, often occurring in the inscriptions, was generally located on the boundary of the village. The Gopas, residing on the boundary, seem to have used the Govāṭa as grazing ground of their cattle. In the Bhāṭerā C.P., Gopa has been associated with the castes like Rajaka, Nāpita, Nāvika, Dantakāra etc. Gopas seem to have represented both cattle-rearers and milkmen. The Gopa-caste is included in the Uttama Saṁkara (B.R.D.P.) and Sat-Śūdra (B.B.R.V.P.) category. It is difficult to accept the suggestion indentifying the Gopa with the Writers' caste. Among the Gopas, those who later adopted agriculture as their profession came to be designated as Sad-gopas in order to distinguish them from Gopas or cattle-rearers. The Sad-gopas, claiming a higher social status, are included in the Navasākhā group of castes.

Antyajās or Untouchables :

The term Antyajā was used in the Smṛtis to denote outcastes who lived outside the pale of Brāhmanical culture and subsisted on occupations of lowly nature. Various subdivisions of the Antyajās are found in the Smṛtis. Later

120. cf. Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla, Gocara in Bāṅgaḍa C.P. of Mahīpāla I, CBI., pp. 100, 200.

Smṛti texts enumerate seven Antyajās viz. Rājaka, Carmakāra, Nāṭa, Baruḍa, Kaivarta, Meda and Bhilla. [Rājakaścarma-
kāraśca naṭo varuḍa eva ca|Kaivarta - meda - bhillāśca
sapataite cāntyajāḥ smṛtāḥ]¹²¹ But this group of Antyajās
was distinguished from another category of untouchables
called Antyavasāyin, viz. Caṇḍāla, Śvapaca, Kṣattā, Sūta,
Vaidehika, Māgadha and Āyogava [Caṇḍālaḥ Śvapacaḥ Kṣattā
Sūto Vaidehikastathā Māgadhāyogavau caiva sapataite antya-
vasāyinaḥ]¹²²

In the later Purāṇas, however, we do not come across
such distinction among Antyajās. Those outcastes are grouped
together as Adhama Saṁkara in the Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa and
Antyajās in the Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa. Some of the Antyajās,
referred to in the Smṛtis, are found to have been upgraded
to the status of Madhyama Saṁkara or Asat-śūdra categories
in the Purāṇas. For example, Kaivarta, Rājaka and Nāṭa are
included in the Madhyama Saṁkara or Asat-śūdra category.
It seems that the essential nature of services rendered by
those castes was gradually realised and, on that ground,

121. PRP. P. 94.

122. Mitākṣarā on Yājñavalkya Saṁhitā, III. 265.

were accorded a comparatively higher status in the social order. Besides, their services, being invariably valued on the occasions of religious rites, rituals, sacraments and ceremonies, those castes were deemed to have been brought within the fold of Brāhmanical culture. On the other hand, the castes, whose services were not considered so essential for the maintenance of the socio-religious order, were deemed to have occupied the lowest status.

The epigraphs of Bengal refer to the lowest castes like Caṇḍāla, Meda, Andhra, Haḍḍipa, Māla, Pulinda etc. The expression Medāndhra - caṇḍālaparyantān often occurs in the Pāla epigraphs. The expression seems to signify all the lower castes including the Caṇḍālas which are regarded the most degraded by the Smṛtis. We get some information about the survival of these lower castes in Bengal from the Caryāpadas¹²³ of Bengal. Some verses in the Caryāpadas refer to Doma, Caṇḍāla and Śavara¹²⁴. The Domas lived outside the town and built baskets and looms. The Śavaras lived in hills and jungles. Moreover, we get references to Haḍḍi and Māla in the Bhāṭerā C.P. of Govinda Keśavadeva. The Naiḥāṭi C.P. of Vallālasena (V.8.), informs that the

123. BI., P. 272.

124. Ibid.

Pulindas lived in forests in or near the border of Bengal.

All these castes appear to have been indicated by the expression Caṇḍālaparyantān.

Meda :

The Medas and the Andhras whose names appear along with that of the Caṇḍālas seem to have derived their origin from some aboriginal stock. The Medas may be identified with the Arimedas mentioned in Varāhamihira's Brhatsamhitā in the list of the peoples inhabiting Central-Provinces of India [Bhaṭṭarimedāh].¹²⁵ It would not be unreasonable to assume that the Medas were originally settled in Medapāṭa (mod. Mewar) referred to in the Mount Abu Inscr.¹²⁶ The people might have given their name to Medānta-kāmpuram which was the capital of Nāgabhaṭa known to us from the Jodhpur Inscr.¹²⁷ (V.S. 894). The city has been identified with Merta lying to the west of Ajmer in Jodhpur. The Kumaon plates¹²⁸ of the 8th century A.D. refer to the Medas settled

125. Brhatsamhitā, ed by Kern, ch. XIV, vv. 24.

126. IA. XVI, pp. 345 - 55.

127. EI. XVII, p. 95, 1.7

128. E.T. Atkinson, Notes on the History of the Himalayas of N. Western Provinces of India, 1883, ch. III, pp. 43-44.

in the Punjab. Again, the Meds along with the Jats are found to have settled in Sindh as early as 7th cent. A.D.¹²⁹

Andhras :

The Andhras, along with the Pulindas, appear as a tribe in some Vedic texts,¹³⁰ epics and Purāṇas. They are the people who belonged to the southern region of India [Dakṣiṇāpathajanmānaḥ]. Scholars have located the Andhras in different parts of the Kṛṣṇā-Godāvarī Valley.¹³¹ The Maiḍāvalu Grant¹³² of the Pallava king Śivaskandavarman indicates that Andhrāpatha, the original habitat of the Andhras, embraced the Kṛṣṇā district with Dhānnakaḍa or Bezwada as its capital.

Caṇḍāla :

The Caṇḍālas in Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra are associated with some aboriginal tribes like Śavaras, Pulindas and

129. A Glossary of the tribes & Castes of the Punjab & N.Western Frontier Provinces, Lahore, 1914.

130. Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, VII. 13 - 18.

131. I.A., 1913, P. 276ff.

132. EI. VI, P. 88.

Vāgurikas who are described as forest-dwellers. [Vāgurika -
Śavara - Pulinda - Caṇḍālāranyacarāṇ rakṣeyuh.].¹³³ The
descendants of these forest dwelling tribes seem to have
been referred to in the expression Vanecarāṇ occurring in
the Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla. Scholars are divided in
their opinions regarding the Austric or Dravidian origin of
the Caṇḍālas. Mr. Beverly is of opinion that Caṇḍāla is a
generic title of the tribe identical with the Mals of
Dravidian origin settled in the Rajmahal hills.¹³⁴ Przyluski's
suggestion regarding the Austric origin of the Doms of
modern India gives us to believe that the Niṣādas, Caṇḍālas
etc. mentioned in the Vedic literature were of Austric
origin as the Doms are said to be the descendants of
Caṇḍālas.¹³⁵ It appears, however, that the Caṇḍālas, like
the Medas and Andhras, belonged to some pre-Aryan aborigi-
nal tribe.

The Smṛti texts refer to the Medas, Andhras and
Caṇḍālas as lower castes of mixed origin. According to
Manu, the Medas and Andhras are the offsprings of Vaidehaka

133. AŚ.I, Bk. II. I, P. 26.

134. H.H.Risley, op. cit., Vol. I, P. 185.

135. N.K.Dutt, op. cit., Vol. I, P. 24, f.n.

father and Niṣāda and Karavāra mothers respectively. These castes, according to Manu, resided outside the village [/Vaidehikādan-dhamedau vahirgrāmāt pratiśrayau, X. 36] and took to the occupation of hunting [/Medāndhra-cañcumād-gūnāmāraṇya-paśu-himsanam X. 48]. The Caṇḍālas have been described by Manu as the 'lowest of mankind' sprung from illicit intercourse of a Śūdra man with a Brāhmaṇa woman [/Āyogavaśca kṣattā ca Caṇḍālaścādhamo nṛṇām |Prātilomyena jāyante Śūdrādapasadastrayaḥ || X. 16]. They have been advised by the law-giver to dwell outside the village [/Caṇḍāla-śvapacānāntu vahirgrāmāt pratiśrayaḥ, X. 51]. Carrying corpses to the burial ground and assassinating the criminals by King's order were their prescribed occupations. [/Vadhyāśca hanyuḥ satataṁ yathā śāstram, X. 56 ; śavañcaiva nirhareyuḥ , X. 55].

The Medas, Andhras and Caṇḍālas are designated as antyajas or untouchables in the later Smṛtis and Smṛti-digests of Bengal. The Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa includes only Caṇḍālas in the list of Adhama Saṁkara. On the other hand, Bhavadeva Bhaṭṭa in his Prāyaścittaprakaraṇam refers to Meda as one of the seven antyajas. So, neither the author of the Purāṇa nor Bhavadeva refers separately to Andhra as

a caste. But their close association with the Medas and Caṇḍālas in the Pāla epigraphs confirms their recognition as one of the castes in Bengal and add to our knowledge about low castes.

Haddipa : (Hāḍi i.e. Scavenger) :

In the Bhāṭerā C.P. of Govinda Keśavadeva is recorded the donation of three houses belonging to the Haddipas (scavenger) as endowment in favour of temple of Śiva. Dr. Wise regards them as "the remnant of a Hinduised aboriginal tribe which was driven into Bengal by the Aryans or persecuting Muhammedans".¹³⁶ This conjecture is borne out by the physical features of the caste. Further, most of the menial castes originated from the aboriginal people.¹³⁷ Although it is difficult to trace the origin of the Hāḍis, their marriage ceremony exhibits survival of non-Aryan custom.¹³⁸

The Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa enlists the Haddi caste in the Antyaja group. The caste has not been referred to in the earlier Smṛtis. Tapping date-trees, making bamboo

136. H.H.Risley, op. cit., Vol. I, P. 314.

137. Ibid. P. 315.

138. Ibid.

combs, playing musical instruments at wedding festivals, carrying palanquins and scavenging are recognised as some of the occupations adopted by the Hādis even today.¹³⁹ They might have rendered similar kind of menial services to the upper castes of the society in the early period. Their social position seems to be the same as that of the Caṇḍālas with whom they are often associated.

Mālo :

The reference to Mālāgr̥ha or Mālagr̥ha in the Bhāṭerā C.P. of Govinda Keśavadeva testifies to the existence of Māla or Malo caste in Eastern Bengal in the 12th century A.D. Some authors are inclined to identify the caste with the Malla referred to in the Manusāṃhitā¹⁴⁰ and included in the category of Adhama Saṃkara group in the Brhadḍharma Purāṇa. According to the Purāṇa, Malla is the offspring of Dhīvara father and Sūdra mother. An attempt may be made to associate the Mālo or Māla caste with Mals of Eastern Bengal who are said to be the descendants of the Mal, a

139. Ibid. P. 316.

140. cf. Jhalla, Malla etc., MS. X. 21.

Dravidian cultivator caste of the Rajmahal hill.¹⁴¹ Most of the authorities couple them with the Caṇḍālas. Some attribute to them the occupation of wrestlers and some others the occupation of snake-charmers.¹⁴²

But, Mālo is also a popular title of Kāpāli or Kawali castes of Eastern Bengal. Kāpāli is a cultivator caste of Eastern Bengal and claims its origin from Kāmār (Karmakāra) father and Teli (Tailakāra) mother. The Kāpālis claim that upto the time of King Ādiśūra, they were classed as Śūdras but their position was lowered by the King due to their refusal of the King's order to serve the imported Brāhmaṇas with water.¹⁴³ Least historical value has been attached to this legend. The Kawali, a caste of musicians, originally belonged to the Kāpāli caste but, having adopted different occupations, formed a separate caste. It is not, however, certain whether the Kāpāli or Kawali caste was indetical with the Mālo. Most of the epigraphs of Bengal

141. H.H.Risley, op.cit., Vol. II, PP. 45 - 47.

142. Ibid. P. 47.

143. Ibid., Vol. I, P. 42.

are land-grants. The study of the land-charters shows that there is hardly any attempt to refer to the castes of the people who were invited to witness the transactions of land. But, incidentally, mention is made, in some epigraphs, of some castes of which knowledge is derived from the Brhaddharma and Brahmavaivarta Purāṇas. The expression Brāhmaṇottarān, occurring in some Pāla records, seems to suggest an indirect reference to all the non-Brahmin castes. The said expression ends with Medāndhra-Canḍāla paryantān indicating the coverage of all grades of mixed-castes upto Canḍālas. But, for the castes intervening between Brāhmaṇa and antya-Canḍāla, we have to depend mainly upon the Paśchimbhāg Copper plate and the Bhāṭerā Copper plate furnishing us with the information regarding some occupational castes like Sūtradhāra, Karmakāra, Mālākāra, Kumbhakāra, Tailakāra, Rajaka, Nāpita, Nāvika etc. Interestingly enough, the Kāyastha and Vaidya castes are specifically mentioned in the 10th century Paśchimbhāg Copper plate Inscription. It would not be unreasonable to assume that most of the mixed-castes, known to us from the 14th century Purāṇas of Bengal, came to be recognised by the 10th century A.D.

As it has been pointed, the Pāla records of the 8th-9th centuries A.D. hardly mention specifically the castes lower than the Brāhmaṇas but higher in status than the Caṇḍāla and other associated 'antyaja' group. On the other hand, specific mention is made of Vanecarāḥ (dwellers in jungles) and Karṣakāḥ (cultivators). It would not be unreasonable that cultivators were recruited mostly from among those jungle-dwellers who were descended from some aboriginal stock. When the process of land-donation to the Brāhmaṇas was in progress, the services of Karṣakas were badly needed for reclamation of forest land and also for intensive cultivation. Kauṭilya in his Arthaśāstra (II.I) recommends that Śūdras are to be settled in the janapadas for cultivation. The epigraphic evidence at our disposal does not preclude the suggestion that the Karṣakas recruited from among the jungle-dwelling aboriginal people were ultimately given the status of Śūdras in the then social order. But those Śūdras, being judged by the criterion of the Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa, should have belonged to, Asat-Śūdra or antyaja category. But in the Brhaddharma Purāṇa, Dāsa or cultivator is included in the Uttama Saṁkara group and Gopa (cattle-rearer as well as cultivator) is assigned the status of Sat-Śūdra in the Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa. The gradual promotion in social status of such

castes signifies the mobility in society.

We have, therefore, a glimpse of the caste-society and the position of different occupational castes in it on the basis of the epigraphic data. The traditional number of thirty-six castes can hardly be traced in the epigraphs. However, it appears from whatever data we can glean from those records that much stress was laid upon the occupations rather than traditional caste-origins of those who directly or indirectly participated in the activities of the body-politic. Reasonably, we are left with an impression that from the point of view of the ruling authority, under ^{whose} order most of the gifts of land were made, the social structure was hierarchical and made up of classes than castes. Because, the groups are designated by their functionality. As such we become familiar with a number of functional classes rather with castes. The priestly class, rather than the Brahmins, the ruling class, rather than the Kṣatriyas, the mercantile class, rather than the Vaiśyas, the artisan class, rather than the Śūdras, and the menial class may be clearly traced in the epigraphs. However, directly or indirectly, the records do not fail to vouchsafe for the existence of so many occupational castes later known from Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva, Aniruddha or the authors of the Purāṇas, Br̥haddharma and Brahmavaivarta.

Appendix - II

List of Occupational Castes found in Bengal epigraphs.

Andhra (menial caste derived from a tribe of that name) :

cf. Nalanda C.P. of Dharmapāla;
Monghyr C.P. of Devapāla;
Bhāgalpur C.P. of Nārāyaṇapāla;
Bāṅgaḍa & Belwā C.P.s of Mahīpāla I;
Belwā & Āmḡāchi C.P.s of Vighrahapāla III;
Jājilpādā C.P. of Gopāla II .

Atṭalikākāra (architect/mason) : cf. Description of temples

and palaces in Gaya Stone Inscr. of the
time of Nayapāladeva, V. 2; Deopārā Praśasti
of Vijayasena V.V. 25, 26;
Edilpur C.P. of Keśavasena, V.V. 23, 24;
Bhuvaneśwar Praśasti of Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva,
V. 28; Kamauli Grant of Vaidyadeva, V. 9.

Caṇḍāla (menial caste) whose Services were mainly rendered

in the cremation ground :

cf. Nālandā C.P. of Dharmapāla;
Monghyr C.P. of Devapāla;
Jājilpādā C.P. of Gopāla II;
Bāṅgaḍa & Belwā C.P.s of Mahīpāla I;

Belwā & Āmgāchi C.P.s of Vighrahapāla III,
Mānāhali Grant of Madanapāla,
Deopārā Praśasti of Vijayasena, V. 30,
(Ref. Śmaśāna : Cremation Ground).

Carmakāra (leather-worker) : cf. Paśchimbhāg C.P. of
Śricandra.

Cetīkā (maid-servant or female slave) : cf. Paśchimbhāg C.P.
of Śricandra,
Monghyr C.P. of Devapāla (V.I),
Belāva C.P. of Bhojavarman (V. 12),
Mādhāinagar C.P. of Lakṣmaṇasena (V. 9),
Reference to seraglio (antahpur, avarodhana)
where the services of cetīkās were
requestioned.

Citrakāra (Painter) whose services were required for the
decoration of palaces, temples, monasteries
and royal banners : cf. Gayā Stone Inscr.
of Nayapāla, Bāṅgaḍa C.P. of Mahīpāla
(reference to Kalā, i.e. fine-arts).

Dantakāra (ivory-worker) : cf. Bhāṭerā C.P. of Govinda
Keśavadeva.

Devadāsī (girls dedicated to the service of God in a temple) :

cf. Bhuvaneśvar Praśasti of Bhavadeva (V.30),
Deopārā Praśasti (V.30).

Dhakkāvādaka (player on big drum) : cf. Paśchimbhāg C.P. of

Śricandra.

Dollavāyika (cf. Ḍolāvāhī, i.e. Palanquin-bearer in BRDP) :

cf. Maināmati C.P. (no.1) of Laḍahacandra,
(reference Ḍollavāyikā probably a village
inhabited by palanquin-bearers).

Drāgaḍika (player on kettle-drum) : cf. Paśchimbhāg C.P. of

Śricandra.

Gaṇaka/Grahavipra (astrologer) : cf. Paśchimbhāg C.P. of

Śricandra, Rāmpāl C.P. of Śricandra, V.7,
(ref. ~~ma~~hūrttika), Bhuvaneśvar Praśasti of
Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva (ref. Horāśāstra), Bādal
Pillar Inscr. of Nārāyaṇapāla, V.20, (ref.
jyotiṣo niṣṇātātām).

Gopa/Ābhīra (cattle-rearer/milk-man) : cf. Khalimpur C.P.

of Dharmapāla, Bhāṭerā C.P. of Govinda
Keśavadeva, Monghyr C.P. of Devapāla, (Kiśora-
vaḍapāgomahiṣājā-vikādhyakṣa).

Haḍḍipa (scavenger) : cf. Bhāṭerā C.P. of Govinda Keśava-
deva.

Kāhalika (player on kahala drum) : cf. ^{in BRVP,} Kauyāli/Paśchimbhāg
C.P. of Śrīcandra.

Kaivarta/Jālika (fisherman) : cf. Belwā C.P. Inscr. of
Mahīpāla I, (ref. Kaivarta-vṛtti), Monghyr
C.P. of Devapāla, (ref. Samatsyah).

Kāmsyakāra (bellmetal worker) : cf. Nālandā C.P. of
Dharmapāla, Maināmati C.P. (no.2) of
Laḍahacandra, (ref. to the village Kāmsya-
kārakaddapolaka), Bhāṭerā C.P. of Govinda
Keśavadeva, Deopārā Praśasti C.P. of
Vijayasena, V.28 (suvarṇakumbha).

Karaṇa/Kāyastha (Scribe/Accountant) cf. Tipperā C.P. of
Lokanātha (ref. Śrīpaṭṭa-prāpta-karaṇāya),
Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla (Karaṇa), Irdā
C.P. of Nayapāla (Karaṇa), Rāmganj C.P. of
Īśvaraghoṣa (Karaṇa), Guṇaighar C.P. of
Vainyagupta (Karaṇa Kāyastha), Ghugrāhāṭi
C.P. of Samācāradeva, (Karaṇika), Tipperā
C.P. of Bhavadeva (Karaṇika), Rāmganj C.P.

of Īśvaraghoṣa, (Karaṇika), Kalāikuri
Sultānpur C.P. of G.E.120 (Kāyastha),
Nidhānpur C.P. (last pt.) of Bhāskaravarman
(Kāyastha), Paśchimbhāg C.P. of Śricandra
(Kāyastha), Dāmodarpur C.P. Nos.1,2,3,4,5,
(Prathama-Kāyastha), Faridpur C.P. of
Dharmāditya and Gopacandra (Jyeṣṭhakāyastha),
Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla, (Jyeṣṭhakāyastha),
Kailān C.P. of Śrīdharaṇarāta, (Mahākāyastha),
Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa, (Mahākāyastha).

Karmakāra (blacksmith) : cf. Kurkihār Bronze Image Inscr.
(no.92) of Rājyapala, Paśchimbhāg C.P. of
Śricandra.

Karṣaka/Kṣetrakara (cultivator, cf. Dāsa, BRDP) Khalimpur
C.P. of Dharmapāla, Bhāgalpur C.P. of
Nārāyaṇapāla, Bāngaḍa C.P. of Mahīpāla I,
Rāmpāl C.P. of Śricandra, Belāva C.P. of
Bhojavarman, . Naihāṭi C.P. of Vallālasena,
Govindapur C.P. of Lakṣmaṇasena, Rāmganj C.P.
of Īśvaraghoṣa, Kamauli C.P. of Vaidyadeva etc.

Kulika (artisan) : cf. Dāmodarpur copper plates of Gupta
Period, (Prathama-kulika).

Kumbhakāra (potter) : cf. Paśchimbhāg C.P. of Śrīcandra,
Nidhānpur C.P. (last-pl) of Bhāskaravarman
(ref. to kumbhakāragartta), Midnāpore C.P.
(no.I) of the time of Śaśṅka (ref. to the
village Kumbhārapadraka), Kamauli C.P. of
Vaidyadeva (Kumbhakāra).

Māgadha (court-bard) : cf. Deopārā Praśasti of Vijayasena,
V.5 (udgiyante yuddhagāthā).

Mālākāra (florist) : cf. Paśchimbhāg C.P. of Śrīcandra,
Bhāṭerā C.P. of Govinda Keśavadeva.

Meḍa (menial caste derived from a tribe of that name) : cf.
Monghyr C.P. of Devapāla, Belwā & Bāngaḍa
C.P. of Mahīpāla, Jājilpāḍā C.P. of Gopāla II,
Āmgāchi and Belwā C.P. of Vighrapāla III etc.

Malla (Boxer, warrior) : cf. Mahābodhi Inscription of
Dharmapāla (Mallānām).

Modaka (sweetmeat-maker), Whose service was rendered for the
preparation of daily offerings to the deities
at the temples, cf. Madhyapāḍā C.P. inscr. (ref.
Devabhoga).

Nagaraśreṣṭhī (President of merchant-guild) : cf. Dāmodarpur
C.P.s of the Gupta period, (Nos. 1,2,4,5,),
Pāhārpur C.P. of G.E. 159.

Nāpita (barber) : cf. Paśchimbhāg C.P. of Śrīcandra, Bhāṭerā
C.P. of Govinda Keśavadeva.

Nāṭa (dancer) : Whose services were requisitioned at royal
or pleasure houses, cf. Paśchimbhāg C.P. of
Śrīcandra, Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla (ref.
to līlā-veśman^{v.13} or pleasure-house), Deopārā
Praśasti of Vijayasena, (ref. Ratālaya or
pleasure house V.1).

Nāvika (boat-man) : cf. Bhāṭerā C.P. of Govinda Keśavadeva,
Guṇaighar C.P. of Vainyagupta, (ref. to
nauyoga (port), Faridpur C.P. (No.3) of
Dharmāditya, (ref. to naudandaka or ferry-
stand), Paśchimbhāg C.P. of Śrīcandra (ref.
naubandha or port), Khalimpur C.P. of
Dharmapāla, Bāngaḍa C.P. of Mahīpāla I,
Mānāhali C.P. of Madanapāla, (ref. tarika).

Rajaka (washerman) : cf. Paśchimbhāg C.P. of Śrīcandra,
Bhāṭerā C.P. of Govinda Keśavadeva.

Śaṅkhakāra (conchshell-worker) : cf. Paśchimbhāg C.P. of Śrīcandra (ref. Śaṅkhavādaka i.e. conchshell-blower).

Sārthavāha (trader) : cf. Dāmodarpur C.P.s (nos. 1,2,4,5,) of the Gupta period, Mandhuk Inscr. of Gopāla II.

Saundika (vintner) : Who used to supply liquor to the pleasure-house, cf. Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla (ref. līlāveśman, V.13), Deopārā Inscr. of Vijaya-sena, (ref. ratālaya, V.1), Gaya Stone Inscr. of the time of Nayapāla, V.12 (ref. madya).

Śilpin/Takṣan/Śilābhīd/Sūtradhāra (engraver) : Dhanāidaha C.P. of Kumāragupta I, Nidhānpur C.P. (last pl.) of Bhāskaravarman, (ref. utkhetayitā), Tipperā C.P. of Lokanātha (ref. utkhātakarman), Mahābodhi Inscr. of the time of Dharmapāla (ref. Śilābhīd), Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla, Bādal Pillar Inscr. of Nārāyaṇapāla, Bhagalpur C.P. of Nārāyaṇapāla, Bhāturiyā Grant of Rājyapāla, Jājilpādā C.P. of Gopāla II (ref. utkirṇa or utkirṇam), Bāngadā C.P. & Belwā C.P. of Mahīpāla I, Belwā C.P., Āmgāchi C.P. & Bāngāon

C.P.s of Vīgrahapāla III, Paśchimbhāg C.P. of Śrīcandra, Mānāhali C.P. of Madanapāla, Deopārā Praśasti of Vijayasena.

Sthapati (architect) : cf. Paśchimbhāg C.P. of Śrīcandra, Kurkihār Image Inscr. of Rājyapāla Nos. 58, 59, (hoṛṇāsthapati), Gaya Stone Inscr. of the time of Nayapāla, Ghosrāvan Rock Inscr. of the time of Devapāla, Deopārā Praśasti of Vijayasena, Bhyvaneśvar Praśasti of Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva, (ref. big temples, monasteries and royal palaces in the above epigraphs).

Sūpakāra (cook) : cf. Maināmati C.P. (no.1) of Laḍahacandra (ref. the place named Sūpakāraavoraka), Tipperā C.P. of Lokanātha (ref. Pācaka).

Svarnakāra (goldsmith) : cf. Nidhānpur C.P. (last pl.) of Bhāskaravarman (ref. Sekyakāra), Kurkihār Image Inscr. of Mahīpāla I, Bihar Image Inscr. of Vīgrahapāla III (ref. Suvarnakāra).

Tailika (oil-presser) : Paśchimbhāg C.P. of Śrīcandra.

Tantuvāya (weaver, Kuvindaka/Jola, BRDP., BRVP.) who seems to have supplied the common-folk as well as royal families with cloths and garments, cf. Bāṅgaḍa C.P. of Mahīpāla I, V.8, (ref. citrām śuka), Deopārā Praśasti of Vijayasena, V.30, (ref. vasana), Mādhāinagar C.P. of Lakṣmaṇasena, V.5, (ref. kṣauma).

Vaidya (physician caste) : cf. Paśchimbhāg C.P. of Śrīcandra, Bhāṭerā C.P. of Īśānadeva, Guṇaighar C.P. of Vainyagupta, (ref. Vaidya-kṣetra), Gayā Inscr. of the time of Nayapāla, 15th reg. yr., (ref. Vaidya-Śrī-Vajrapāṇi), Gayā Stone Inscr. of the time of Nayapāla, 15th reg. yr. (ref. Vāji-Vaidya or Veterinary physician), Bhāgalpur C.P. of Nārāyaṇapāla (cf. bhaiṣajya), Bhuvaneśvar Inscr. of Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva, (ref. Āyurveda).

Vaṇik (merchant), Gandhavaṇik/Suvarṇavanik etc. cf. Nārāyaṇpur Image Inscr. of the time of Mahīpāla I, Kurkihār Bronze Inscr. of the Pālas (No.21), Chandimau Image Inscr. of Rāmapāla, Faridpur C.P. of Gopacandra (ref. Pradhānavyāparin), Ghugrāhāṭi C.P. of Samācāradeva, (ref. vyāvahārin), Kurkihār Image Inscr. of Mahīpāla I,

(ref. Suvarṇakāra), Scents were supplied by Gandhavaṇiks, Paharpur C.P. of G.E.159 (ref. gandha); Deopara Inscr. of Vijayasena (ref. stanainamadasaurabha i.e. V.20) fragrance of musk applied on the breasts; Mānāhalī G.P. of Madanapāla, (ref. Karpūra or Comphor, V.17).

Vārajika/Tāmbulī (betelvine-grower) : cf. Sobhārāmpur C.P. of Daśarathadeva; Madhyapādā copper plate Inscr. of Viśvarūpasena (ref. varaja); Madanpādā C.P. of Viśvarūpasena (ref. village Vāraipadā).

Vyādha/Tīvara (hunter) : cf. Khalimpur copper plate Inscription of Dharmapāla, (ref. Vanecara or forest-dwellers i.e. hunters V. 13).

Appendix III

Select cognomens occurring in the Inscriptions of Bengal

1. Susuniā Rock Inscr. of Candravarman (4th century A.D.)

(Candra) varman (Mahārāja)

2. Dhanāidaha Copper-plate Inscr. of Kumāragupta-I (A.D. 432-33)

(Śrī) bhadra (Mahattara)

(Stambheśvara) dāsa (")

(Kṣema) datta (")

(Soma) pāla (")

(Viṣṇudeva) śarman (")

3. Kalāikuri Copper-plate Inscr. of Kumāragupta I (G.E. 120= A.D. 439)

(Picca) kunḍa (Mahattara)

(Unṭa) śarman (")

4. Dāmodarpur Copper-plate Inscr. (No.1) of Kumāragupta-I (G.E. 124= A.D. 444)

(Cīrāta) datta (Uparika)

(Vibhu) datta (Pustapāla)

(Dhṛti) mitra (Prathamakulika)

(Vandhu) mitra (Sārthavāha)

(Jaya) nandī (Pustapāla)

(Dhṛti) <u>pāla</u>	(Nagaraśreṣṭhī)
(Śāmba) <u>Pāla</u>	(Prathama-Kāyastha)
(Vetra) <u>varman</u>	(Kumārāmātya)

5. Baigrām Copper-plate Inscription (G.E. 128= A.D. 448)

(Arkka) <u>dāsa</u>	(Pustapāla)
(Durga) <u>datta</u>	(")
(Śiva) <u>nandī</u>	(")

6. Jagadishpur Copper-plate of the Gupta period (G.E. 128 = A.D. 448).

(Jyeṣṭha) <u>dāma</u>	(Vithīmahattara)
(Yaśo) <u>dāma</u>	(Pustapāla)
(Nārāyaṇa) <u>dāsa</u>	(Kuṭumbin)
(Bhava) <u>datta</u>	(")
(Nara) <u>deva</u>	(")
(Hiraṇya) <u>gupta</u>	(")
(Śiva) <u>kuṇḍa</u>	(Sramaṇācārya)
(Bala) <u>kuṇḍa</u>	(Kuṭumbi)
(Śarvva) <u>Nāga</u>	(")
(Simha) <u>nandī</u>	(Pustapāla)
(Sarppa) <u>pālita</u>	(Kuṭumbi)
(Hari) <u>śarmā</u>	(")
(Dhana) <u>viṣṇu</u>	(")

(Kumāra) yaśah

(kutumbin)

7. Dāmodarpur Copper-plate (No. 3) of the time of
Budhagupta (A.D. 482)

(Patra) dāsa

(Pustapāla)

(Nāga) deva

(village man)

8. Dāmodarpur Copper-plate (No. 4) of the time of
Budhagupta (A.D. 476 - 495).

(Jaya) datta

(Uparika)

(Vara) datta

(Prathamakulika)

(Viṣṇu) datta

(Pustapāla)

(Vasu) mitra

(Sārthavāha)

(Vijaya) nandin

(Pustapāla)

(Ribhu) pāla

(Nagaraśreṣṭhi)

(Vipra) pāla

((Prathamakāyastha)

9. Nandapur Copper-plate (G.E. 169 = A.D. 489)

(Bandhu) dāsa

(Pustapāla)

(Pradyota) siṃha

(")

10. Gunaighar Copper-plate of Vainyagupta (A.D. 507)

(Nara) datta

(Sandhivigrahāri-Karaṇa
Kāyastha)

(Rudra) datta

(Provincial Governor)

(Vijaya) sena

(Feudatory chief)

11. Dāmodarpur Copper-plate No. 5 (A.D. 543).

(Gopa) <u>datta</u>	(Pustapāla)
(Mati) <u>datta</u>	(Prathamakulika)
(Sthānu) <u>datta</u>	(Sārthavāha)
(Bhaṭa) <u>nandi</u>	(Pustapāla)
(Nara) <u>nandi</u>	(")
(Ribhu) <u>pāla</u>	(Nagaraśreṣṭhi)
(Skanda) <u>pāla</u>	(Prathamakāyastha)

12. Faridpur Copper-plate No. 1 of Dharmāditya (3rd regnal year).

(Ghoṣa) <u>candra</u>	(Viṣayamahattara) year).
(Kula) <u>candra</u>	(")
(Śiva) <u>candra</u>	(Land-measurer)
(Sthānu) <u>datta</u>	(Provincial governor)
(Ani) <u>mitra</u>	(Viṣayamahattara)
(Vinaya) <u>sena</u>	(Pustapāla)

13. Faridpur Copper-plate No. 2 of Dharmāditya.

(Śiva) <u>candra</u>	(Land measurer)
(Nāga) <u>deva</u>	(Uparika)
(Soma) <u>ghoṣa</u>	(Mahattara)
(Naya) <u>sena</u>	(Jyeṣṭhakāyastha)
(Dharma) <u>śīla</u>	(Land-measurer)

(Gopāla) svāmī

(Viṣayapati)

(Soma) svāmin

(Brahmin donee)

14. Faridpur Copper-plate No. 3 of Gopacandra.

(Nāga) deva

(Uparika)

(Naya) sena

(Jyeṣṭhakāyastha)

15. Mallasārul Copper-plate of Vijayasena.

(Bhoga) candra

(Sāndhivigrahika)

(Jaya) dāsa

(Pustapāla)

(Hima) datta

(Mahattara)

(Śubha) datta

(Dūtaka)

(Bhadra) nandī

(Khādgi i.e. swordsman)

16. Ghugrāhāṭi Copper-plate of Samācāradeva (104 Saṃvat)

(Priya) dāsa

(Mahattara)

(Jīva) datta

(Uparika)

(Śūra) datta

(Mahattara)

(Samācāra) deva

(Mahārājādhirāja)

(Vihita) ghoṣa

(Mahattara)

(Janārdana) kuṇḍa

(Mahattara)

(Naya) nāga

(Karaṇika)

(Śuci) pālita

(Mahattara)

17. Tipperā Copper-plate of Lokanātha

(Pācaka) <u>basu</u>	(Cook)
(Vappa) <u>candra</u>	(Brāhmaṇa donee)
(Dharma) <u>dāma</u>	(Brāhmaṇa donee)
(Bhogibhava) <u>dāsa</u>	
(Āpa) <u>datta</u>	(Brāhmaṇa donee)
(Brahma) <u>datta</u>	(Brāhmaṇa donee)
(Praśānata) <u>deva</u>	(Engraver)
(Prasanta) <u>deva</u>	
(Yajña) <u>deva</u>	(Brāhmaṇa donee)
(Purṇa) <u>ghoṣa</u>	(")
(Medha) <u>soma</u>	(")

18. Kailān Copper-plate of Sridharanarata

(Bhāskara) <u>candra</u>	(Mahākāyastha)
(Jaya) <u>nātha</u>	(Sāndhivigrahika)
(Baladhārana) <u>rāta</u>	(Prince)
(Jīvadhārana) <u>rāta</u>	(Feudatory king)
(Srīdhārana) <u>rāta</u>	(")

19. Vappaghoṣavāṭa Grant of Jayanāga.

(Nārāyaṇa) <u>bhadra</u>	(Feudal chief)
(Sūrya) <u>sena</u>	(Mahāpratīhāra)

20. I. Midnāpur Copper-plate No. 1 of the time of Śaśāṅka

(Prakīrṇa) <u>dāsa</u>	(Minister of Somadatta)
(Soma) <u>datta</u>	(Feudal chief)

20. II. Midnāpur Copper-plate No. 2 of the time of Śaśāṅka

(Śubha) <u>kīrtti</u>	(Mahāpratihāra)
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21. I. Nidhānpur Copper-plate of Bhāskaravarman, Third plate

(First side & second side)

(Śubha) <u>dāma</u>	(Brāhmaṇa donee)
(Īśvara) <u>datta</u>	(")
(Cakra) <u>deva</u>	(")
(Vedānta) <u>ghoṣa</u>	(")
(Śakti) <u>kunḍa</u>	(")
(Viṣṇu) <u>pālita</u>	(")
(Dāma) <u>rāta</u>	(")
(Madhu) <u>sena</u>	(")
(Viṣṇu) <u>soma</u>	(")
(Soma) <u>vasu</u>	(")

II. Nidhānpur Copper-plate of Bhāskaravarman, Fourth
or Fifth Plate

(Vīra) <u>bhūti</u>	(Brāhmaṇa donee)
(Śrāddha) <u>dāsa</u>	(")

(Karka) <u>datta</u>	(Brahmaṇa donee)
(Janārdana) <u>deva</u>	(")
(Mano) <u>ghoṣa</u>	(")
(Madhu) <u>mitra</u>	(")
(Gopāla) <u>nandi</u>	(")
(Soma) <u>sena</u>	(")
(Vakula) <u>soma</u>	(")

III. Nidhānpur Copper-plate of Bhāskaravarman, Sixth Plate

(Sumati) <u>bhaṭṭi</u>	(Brāhmaṇa donee)
(Candra) <u>dāsa</u>	(")
(Vasu) <u>datta</u>	(")
(Sarva) <u>deva</u>	(")
(Mano) <u>ghoṣa</u>	(")
(Yajña) <u>pāla</u>	(")
(Dāma) <u>rāta</u>	(")

IV. Nidhānpur Copper-plate of Bhāskaravarman, Seventh Plate

(Hara) <u>datta</u>	(Vyāvahārin)
(Śriksi) <u>kunḍa</u>	(Sīmāpradātā)
(Dundhu) <u>nātha</u>	(Kāyastha)
(Vasu) <u>varṇa</u>	(Śāsayitā, lekhayitā)

22. I. Āshrafpur Copper-plate No. 1 of Devakhaḍga

(Puro) dāsa

(Scribe)

II. Āshrafpur Copper-plate no. 2 of Devakhaḍga

(Rāja) dāsa

(Cultivator)

(Saṅgha) mitra

(Ācārya)

(Yajña) varmā

(Dūtaka)

23. Kāhlāpur Copper-plate of Sāmanta Maruṇḍanātha

(Maruṇḍa) nātha

(Feudatory chief)

24. Khalimpur Copper-plate of Dharmapāla

(Tribhuvana) pāla

(Dūtaka)

(Nārāyaṇa) varmā

(Mahāsāmanta)

25. Monghyr Copper-plate of Devapala

(Vihekarāta) miśra

(Brāhmaṇa donee)

26. Bādal Pillar Inscription of the time of Nārāyaṇapāla

(9th century A.D.)

(Viṣṇu) bhadra

(engraver)

(Gurava) miśra

(Brahmin counsellor)

(Kedāra) miśra

(Brahmin counsellor)

(Nārāyaṇa) pāla

(King)

(Darbha) pāṇi

(Brahmin counsellor)

27. Chittagong Copper-plate Inscription of Kāntideva

(9th century A.D.)

(Bhadra) datta

(Predecessor of Kāntideva)

(Dhana) datta

(")

28. Bhāturiyā Stone Inscription of Rājyopāla (10th century

A.D.)

(Malha) dāsa

(Predecessor of Yaśodāsa)

(Śūra) dāsa

(")

(Saṅgha) dāsa

(")

(Yaśo) dāsa

(Minister of Rājyapāla)

29. Jājilpādā Copper-plate of Gopāla II (10th century A.D.)

(Vimala) dāsa

(engraver)

(Śrī) dhara

(Brahmin donee)

(Deva) pāla

(King)

(Dharma) pāla

(")

30. Mandhuk Inscription of Gopāla II (10th century A.D.)

(Jambhala) mitra

(trader)

31. Kurkihār Terracotta Plaque of Vīgrahapāla II or III

(Śānta) rakṣita

(donee)

32. Baghaura Image Inscription of Mahipala I, regnal
year 3 (10th century A.D.)

(Loka) <u>datta</u>	(merchant)
(Mahi) <u>pala</u>	(King)

33. Nārāyaṇapur Image Inscription of the time of Mahīpāla I,
regnal year 4 (10th century A.D.)

(Buddha) <u>mitra</u>	(merchant)
(Jambhala) <u>mitra</u>	(")
(Mahī) <u>pāla</u>	(King)

34. Belwā Copper-plate Inscription of Mahīpāla I (10th
century A.D.)

(Puṣy) <u>āditya</u>	(engraver)
(Lakṣmī) <u>dhara</u>	(Minister)
(Jīvaḍharadeva) <u>śarman</u>	(Brahmin donee)

35. Bāṅgaḍa Copper-plate Inscription of Mahīpāla I
(10th century A.D.)

(Mahī) <u>dhara</u>	(engraver)
(Kṛṣṇāditya) <u>śarman</u>	(Brahmin donee)

36. Gaya Stone Inscription of the time of Nayapāla
(10th century)

(Sattā) soma

(engraver)

37. Paśchimbhāg Copper-plate of Śrīcandra, regnal
year 5 (10th century A.D.)

(Śānti) dāma

(Brāhmaṇa donee)

(Hara) dāsa

(")

(Siṃha) datta

(")

(Śrī) dhara

(")

(Nanda) ghoṣa

(")

(Ravi) kara

(")

(Dhanya) nāga

(")

(Kamala) nandī

(")

(Bhīma) pāla

(")

(Garga) śarman

(")

(Nanda) yaśaḥ

(")

38. Madanpur Copper-plate of Śrīcandra (10th century A.D.)

(Śukra) deva

(Brahmin donee)

39. Rāmpāl Copper-plate of Śrīcandra (10th century A.D.)

(Śrī) candra

(King)

(Makkada) gupta

(Brāhmaṇa donee)

40. Maināmati Copper-plate (No. 1) of Laḍahacandra, regnal
year 6 (11th century A.D.)

(Laḍaha) candra

(King)

41. Betkā Vāsudeva Image Inscription of Govindacandra
regnal year 23

(Gaṅga) dāsa

(under whose initiative the
image was made)

(Pāra) dāsa

(father of Gaṅgadāsa)

42. Irdā Copper-plate of Kāmboja Nayapāla (11th century A.D.)

(Naya) pāla

(Kāmboja ruler)

43. Belwā Copper-plate of Vigrahapāla III, regnal year 11
(11th century A.D.)

(Pr̥thu) deva

(engraver)

(Kṣmā) pāla

(Messenger)

44. Āmgāchi Copper-plate of Vigrahapāla III, regnal year 12
(11th century A.D.)

(Śaśī) deva

(engraver)

45. Bangāon Copper-plate of Vigrahapāla III, regnal year 17
(11th century A.D.)

(Saśī) deva

(engraver)

(Ghaṇṭuka) śarman

(Brahmin donee)

46. Nimdighi Inscription of the time of Gopāla II or III
(11th century A.D.)

(Bhāvaka) dāsa

(panegyrist)

47. Rānganj Copper-plate of Īśvaraghoṣa (11th century A.D.)

(Śrīdhūrta) ghoṣa

(Predecessor of feudatory
chief Īśvaraghoṣa)

(Śrīvala) ghoṣa

(")

(Dhavalā) ghoṣa

(")

(Īśvara) ghoṣa

(Mahāmāṇḍalika)

48. Kamauli Copper-plate of Vaidyadeva (11th century A.D.)

(Karna) bhadra

(engraver)

(Yoga) deva

(Minister of Vigrahapāla III,
predecessor of Vaidyadeva)

(Bodhi) deva

(Minister of King Kumārapāla)

49. Mānāhali Copper-plate of Madanapāla, regnal year 8
(12th century A.D.)

(Bhīma) <u>deva</u>	(Sāndhivigrahika)
(Madana) <u>pāla</u>	(King)

50. Ārmā Inscription of Madanapāla's time, regnal year 14
(12th century A.D.)

(Jaska) <u>pāla</u> or Yakṣa	(Mahāmāṇḍalika)
(Deva) <u>sena</u>	(Pīṭhīpati Ācārya)

51. Sāmantasār Copper-plate of Harivarman (12th century A.D.)

(Vedagarbha) <u>śarman</u>	(grand-father of the Brahmin donee)
(Hari) <u>varman</u>	(King)

52. Vajrayoginī Plate of Sāmalavarman (12th century A.D.)

(Bhīma) <u>deva</u>	(person who initiated the construction of monastery of Prajñāpāramitā)
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53. Belāva Copper-plate of Bhojavarman, regnal year 5
(12th century A.D.)

(Rāmadeva) <u>śarman</u>	(Śāntyāgārādhikṛta)
(Bhoja) <u>varman</u>	(King)

54. Deopārā Prasāsti of Vijayasena (12th century A.D.)

(Umāpati) <u>dhara</u>	(Panegyrist)
(Vijaya) <u>sena</u>	(King)

55. Barrackpore Copper-plate of Vijayasena (12th century A.D.)

(Udaya) <u>kara</u>	(Brahmin donee)
(Śālāḍḍa) <u>nāga</u>	(messenger)

56. Naiḥāti Copper-plate of Vallālasena, regnal year 11 (12th century A.D.)

(Hari) <u>ghoṣa</u>	(messenger)
(Vāsudeva) <u>śarman</u>	(Brahmin donee)
(Vallāla) <u>sena</u>	(King)

57. Govindapur Copper-plate of Lakṣmaṇasena, regnal year 2 (12th century A.D.)

(Nārāyaṇa) <u>datta</u>	(messenger)
(Vyāsadeva) <u>śarman</u>	(Brahmin donee)
(Lakṣmaṇa) <u>sena</u>	(King)

58. Tarpandighi Copper-plate of Lakṣmaṇasena, regnal year 2 (12th century A.D.)

(Nārāyaṇa) <u>datta</u>	(Sāndhivigrahika, messenger)
(Nara) <u>nātha</u>	

59. Sunderban Copper-plate of Lakṣmaṇasena (12th century A.D.)

(Rāma) <u>deva</u>	(Śāntyāgārika, Brahmin)
(Kṛṣṇa) <u>dhara</u>	(Brahmin donee)
(Viṣṇu) <u>pāṇi</u>	(Śāntyāgārika, Brahmin)

60. Śaktipur Copper-plate of Lakṣmaṇasena, regnal year 6

(Tripurāri) <u>nātha</u>	(messenger of the grant)
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61. Rakṣākālī Island Plate Inscription of Maḍommanapāla

Śaka Era 1118 (A.D. 1196).

(Dommana) <u>pāla</u>	(Sāmanta)
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62. Ādāvādi Copper-plate of Daśarathadeva, regnal year 3

(13th century A.D.)

(Śrī) <u>bhaṭṭa</u>	(Brahmin donee)
(Daśaratha) <u>deva</u>	(King)
(Sandhyā) <u>kara</u>	(Brahmin donee)
(Śrī) <u>soma</u>	(")

63. Maināmatī Copper-plate of Raṇavaṅkamalla, regnal year 17,

Śaka Era - 1141 (A.D. 1219)

(Raṇavaṅkamalla Harikāla) <u>deva</u>	(King)
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64. Madanpādā Copper-plate of Viśvarūpasena, regnal year 14

(13th century A.D.)

(Viśvarūpa) sena

(King)

(Kopī) viṣṇu

(Sāndhivigrahika, messenger
of the grant)

65. Calcutta Sāhitya-pariṣat Copper-plate of Viśvarūpasena,

(13th century A.D.)

(Sūrya) sena

(Prince)

(Puruṣottama) sena

(Prince)

(Nānī) siṃha

(Sāndhivigrahika)

66. Mehār Copper-plate of Dāmodaradeva (13th century A.D.)

(Munī) dāsa

(Sāndhivigrahika)

(Dāmodara) deva

(King)

67. Bhāṭerā Copper-plate of Īśānadeva (13th century A.D.)

(Īśāna) deva

(King)

(Vanamālī) kara

(Minister)

CHAPTER IV

Social Hierarchy based on the Land-system

The social structure in early Bengal appears to have hinged upon the agrarian economy that was based upon the prevalent land-system. A study of the land-charters, which are more abundant in Bengal, may fruitfully be made to trace the class-stratification, rights and obligations of different classes and interrelation between them.

Categories of land-charters

The land-charters inform us that some plots of land or a number of villages were granted by citizens or princes in favour of some members belonging to the priestly class, or some religious establishments like temples or monasteries. These land-charters may be classified into two categories, namely, sale-deeds and land-grants. The Gupta and the Post-Gupta land-charters found in Bengal are mostly sale-deeds registered for the purpose of making donations, while the charters of the later period from the 8th century onward simply record land-donations.

Land-transactions : Procedure

The records of the Gupta and Post-Gupta period show that a person intending to purchase a plot of land was

required to submit a petition to the Adhikaraṇa of a district or the Aṣṭakulādhikaraṇa¹ of a village in accordance with the location of the land in question, stating the object of purchase, that is, making donation, for religious purpose, types of land, namely, Kṣetra, Vāpa-kṣetra, Khila, Aprahata, Vāstu etc. to be purchased as per current local prices and principle of Nīvi-dharma-kṣaya, that is destroying the condition of non-transferability.

In the epigraphs of the Gupta period, purchasers or intending donors were house-holders, or members of the Advisory board, attached with the District administration. In the Dhanāidaha C.P.² of Kumāragupta, an Āyuktaka (Sub-divisional officer) is found to have donated ~~the~~ kulyavāpa of land to a brahmin named Varāhasvamin. In the Dāmodarpur C.P. (no. 4) of Budhagupta, the donor is Śreṣṭhī Ribhupāla, a member belonging to the Advisory board of the District administration³. In two Dāmodarpur C.P.s, two brahmins submitted a prayer to the government for purchasing land with religious purpose. The type of the land, specifically

1. SI. Vol. I, PP. 284, 324.

2. Ibid. P. 281.

3. Ibid. P. 329.

mentioned by the petitioner, was Vāstu or dwelling-site, Kṣetra or cultivated land and Khila - kṣetra or uncultivated land or fallow or waste-land. According to the Nāradaśmṛti, the land which lies uncultivated for one year is ardhakhila and that which remains uncultivated for three years (11,26) is Khila-bhūmi. The term Khila-bhūmi might also stand for uncultivable land.⁴ The petitioner seems to have intended to donate such plots of land in order to provide means of livelihood to the donee. As a rule, the land donated for religious purpose was made rentfree. The question of exemption from taxes in case of uncultivable land could not arise.

The petition for purchase of land was sent to the Pustapāla or Record-keeper who was the final arbiter to settle whether the land should be sold or not, as he maintained detailed record of the land concerned. When the Record-keeper signified his consent, the land in question was sold at the prevalent rate and demarcated according to the local measuring unit [aṣṭaka-navakanalābhyāmapaviñchya]⁵ in presence of the village-elders

4. cf. hajjika-khilabhūmi, i.e. water-logged waste-land, Guṇaighar C.P. of Vainyagupta, Ibid., P. 335.

5. CBI., P.51.

[mahattarādyadhikaraṇa - kuṭumbibhiḥ pratyavekṣya] ⁶.

As it has been pointed out, the purchaser of the land usually donated it for some religious purposes. In all cases, by the pious act of donation accrued 'Punya' of merit in favour of the donor. Again, the income derived from the gifted land enabled the brahmin donee to perform his daily rites and rituals, or to meet the expenditure of daily worship at a temple and that of occasional repairs of the temple concerned, or to feed the monks, as the case may be. By the pious act of land-grant with various immunities the king is also said to have earned one-sixth of the religious merit. [Bhaṭṭāarakapādānām dharmaphala - ṣaḍbhāgāvāptiśca, Baigrām C.P.] ⁷. Generally, the king was entitled to the one-sixth share of the produce of the land. When he exempted the donee from the burden of making payment of such revenue, it was quite natural that he would be entitled to one-sixth of the religious merit accruing from the pious act of donations made for religious purposes.

Land was granted according to the rules of Akṣayanivī (cf. Baigrām C.P.), Nivīdharmā (Dāmodarpur C.P. no. 1),

6. Ibid. P. 59.

7. Ibid. P. 50.

Apradākṣayanīvidharma (Dāmodarpur C.P. no. 2) and Apradā
(Dāmodarpur C.P. no. 5). By these rules, the donees were
accorded the right to enjoy revenue-free land without having
the right to destroy or alienate it. Rarely do we find
mention of such rules in the post-Gupta land-charters, except
the Vappaghoshavāṭa C.P., as late as the 7th century A.D.
In the land-charters of the Pāla-Candra-Varman-Sena period,
the king is found to have made land-endowment to the
brahmin donees or some religious establishments like temples
and monasteries. Sometimes, the king was requested by some
of his feudatory chiefs or officials to donate to the
religious beneficiaries in their own jurisdiction.⁸ The
royal officials of all grades as well as the people repre-
senting different classes of the society witnessed the
land-transactions, presumably at the invitation of State.
The benefices in all these records were donated in perpetuity
according to the principle of bhūmicchidra [bhūmicchidra-
nyāyena candrārka - kṣītisamakālaṁ tathaiva pratiṣṭhāpitam]
denoting enjoyment of rent-free holding by one who brings
it under cultivation for the first time.⁹ According to
Kauṭilya (3rd century B.C.) and Vaijayantī (11th century
A.D.), bhūmicchidra means uncultivable land which yields no

8. cf. Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla, Ibid., P.100 .

9. IEG., P., 393.

produce. Non-alienation according to the rule of Akṣayanīvi is not implied by it. The charters record specifically the concessions granted to the donees. The donees were granted the right to the pasture - grounds, orchards, water-tanks abounding in fish, pits of salt etc., judicial power of inflicting punishment for criminal offences and exemption from all sorts of taxes payable to the king śvasīmā-vacchinnā tṛṇapūtīgocaraparyantā satalā soddeśā sāmrapanaśā saguvākanārikelā salavaṇā sajalasthalā sagartoṣarā sahyadaśāparādha parihṛtasarvapīdā 11.37-40¹⁰

A charter generally concludes with an exhortation, the names of officials responsible for the preparation of the document and the date and authentication. The notification of a grant is often followed by an exhortation or admonition addressed by the donor to the contemporary rulers and future kings and to the royal officials and subjects. It is requested that the addressees should respect the grant made by the donor, keeping in mind the glory of land-donation and the sins incurred by an encroachment on the gift-land śbhavadbhissarvairēva bhūmerdānaphala - gauravādapaharṇe ca mahānarakapātādibhayāddānamidamanumodya paripālanīyam¹¹

10. cf. Belāva C.P. of Bhojavarmadeva, IB., P. 21.

11. cf. Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla, II. 54-55, CBI., P. 101.

The residents of a gift-village were generally advised to make over their dues in cash or in kind to the donee and also to obey him in all respects [prativāsibhiḥ kṣetrakaraś cājñā - śravaṇa - vidheairbhūtvā samucita - kara - piṇḍakādi - sarva - pratyāyopanayaḥ kārya iti, Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla, 11.55-56]. The appeal for the preservation of the grant is sometimes found to be accompanied by injunctions in prose and verse referring to the merit accruing from the grant of land, to the maintenance of such a grant and to the suffering that would befall the confiscators or violators of the injunctions.

Finally, the charters are endorsed by royal officers with the royal seal and dates either counted from some eras (e.g. La Saṁ) or by regnal years of the contemporary ruler.

Legal validity of the land-charters

It may be reasonably held that the land-charters endorsed by the State-officials and authenticated by the royal seal and date were considered as legal documents. Those might be required by the Court of Law in the judicial procedure related to the dispute over land. The principle of nivīdharma or bhūmicchidra as well as exhortation in favour of the gift appear to indicate the donee's claim

over the landed property for perpetuity. The boundaries of the donated land, as enumerated in the charters, seem to have been considered as valid evidence to settle any boundary dispute. The validity of the charters ensured for the donees the unquestionable enjoyment of immunities as laid down in the records, so that they could not be chastised by the future rulers for non-payment of taxes. The Smṛtinivandha-kāras of Bengal have often referred to such land-charters as recognised legal evidence¹².

The immunities and privileges conferred on the religious beneficiaries empowered them with the right of administering criminal justice [sadaśāpacāraḥ]¹³ and collecting revenue from the tenants in their own jurisdiction. There was no obligation on the part of the donees except abiding by the rule of non-alienation of the property. On the other hand, the residents of the gift-land, as it has been pointed above, were directed to oblige the donees by making over to them all the dues payable to the king. Thus, being authorised with fiscal and judicial rights, the beneficiaries of the land-grants gradually rose to power and virtually enjoyed an independent status in their own 'feuds'. They formed, in course of time, an intermediary land-owning class

12. Suresh Chandra Bandyopadhyaya, Smṛtiśāstre Bāṅgālī, Calcutta, 1368 B.S., P. 155.

13. CBI., P. 101.

that snapped the direct relations between the king and the tillers of the soil. Creation of free holding, however, incurred loss of revenue to the royal exchequer. But the brahmin beneficiaries, in return, shouldered, as desired by the king, the responsibility of making the people conversant with the Vedic culture. Bengal, for a long time, was outside the pale of Aryan fold and it was by the zealous endeavour of the ruling authority that the Vedic culture made steady expansion in Bengal with the settlement of brahmins, on a large scale, in the lands gifted to them. The delegation of substantial administrative power to the donees on a hereditary basis, by dint of series of concessions already referred to, paved the way towards the emergence of a new class in the society. From the Mitākṣarā, a commentary on the Yājñavalkya Smṛti, it appears that there were four hierarchical stages, viz. Mahīpati (King), Kṣetrasvāmin (land-owner), Karṣaka (cultivator) and the hiredlabourer. From the epigraphs we come to know of the first three stages only. That the newly emerging land-owning class had their lands cultivated by the Karṣakas is quite apparent. If there were peasants acting as tenants under the Kṣetrasvāmin, they might employ hired labourer for cultivation of land.

Secular assignment :

Another presage of the growth of landed intermediaries was granting of land-assignment in lieu of remuneration to officials, who served as governors of some provincial and local administrative units discharging the functions of executive, judicial and fiscal nature. We have, however, very few land-charters recording land-assignment to the officials. Some information in this regard, however, may be derived from the available land-donation charters. The Dāmodarpur Copper-plates dated 5th century A.D. suggest that the position of Uparikas (Provincial governors) put in charge of Puṇḍravardhanabhukti was hereditary, as they belonged to the Dutta family, and mostly Viṣayapatis (District-officer) were held responsible to the Uparikas. Again, the Guṇaighar C.P.¹⁴ of Vainyagupta (G.E. 188) informs us that the king was served by Mahārāja Rudradatta and Mahāsāmanta Vijayasena presumably holding the position of feudatories. The latter held the office of Mahāpratīhāra Pañcādhikaraṇoparika. It appears that the feudatories concerned held vast landed property under the suzerainty of Mahārājādhirāja Vainyagupta.

14. Ibid., PP. 65, 66.

The Post-Gupta land-grants give us to understand that the royal officials belonging to the bureaucracy, or the feudatories owing allegiance to the king, often made donation of lands for religious purposes. It may be reasonably suggested that such donations would have been impossible, had they not been allowed by the sovereign ruler to enjoy vast landed property. Śaśāṅka's feudatories Śrī - sāmanta - mahārāja Somadatta and Mahāpratīhāra Subhakīrti donated villages to the brahmins.¹⁵ In the Tipperā C.P. of Lokanātha,¹⁶ Mahāsāmanta Pradoṣaśarman, the brahmin feudatory chief of Lokanātha, is said to have donated forest-land in the eastern-most fringe of Bengal to a large number of Brāhmaṇas for their settlement. Pradoṣaśarman had to seek permission of his overlord Lokanātha through the messenger Lakṣmīnātha, son of Lokanātha, before making the said gift of forest-land in Suvvūṅgaviṣaya that lay in the territory ruled over by Lokanātha. From the Kailān C.P.¹⁷ of Śrīdhāraṇarāta, Minister-in-charge of Peace and War (Mahāsāndhivigrahādhikṛta), first received the grant of twenty-five pāṭakas

15. Midnāpore Copper-plates of the time of Śaśāṅka,

JRASL. XI (1945), P. 1ff.

16. EI. XV, P. 306ff.

17. IHQ. XXIII, P. 221ff.

of land from king Śrīdhāraṇarāta, retained 7½ pāṭakas of land for his own enjoyment and donated the rest in favour of a Buddhist monastery and some Vedic brahmins.

In the Pāla-Sena records may be traced references to some secular holdings. The Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla mentions an official designated Dāśagrāmika (officer-in-charge of ten villages), who according to the Manusāhitā, used to have been allotted one 'kula' of land [daśī kulantu bhuñjita viṃśī pañca kulāni ca].¹⁸ The same record refers to Mahāsāmanta Nārāyaṇavarman, who seems to have been assigned a piece of land in Puṇḍravardhanabhukti. Indirect evidence of the grant of land to a high official named Ghaṇṭīśa is found in the Bangāon C.P.¹⁹ of Vīgrahapāla III. This official is said to have donated a plot of land to a brahmin out of his own holding. That some plots of land were allotted to some of the members of the royal family as well as officials is indirectly suggested by the Calcutta Sāhitya Pariṣat C.P.²⁰ of Viśvarūpasena. The record informs us that a Brāhmaṇa called Halāyūdhā purchased land from two princes of the royal family, namely, Sūryasena and

18. MS. VII. 119.

19. EI. XXIX, P. 48.

20. CBI., PP. 326 - 27.

Puruṣottama, and received grant from Nānisiṃha, Minister of Peace and War. The Belwā C.P.²¹ of Mahipāla I furnishes the evidence of secular grant of two hundred measure of land, once allotted to the Kaivartas, for the maintenance of certain services, which are not specified and which the king donated to a brahmin as a free-holding by the present land-charter. Rājās, Rājaputras, Rāṇakas, Mahāsāman-
tas and Maṇḍalapati, often mentioned in the Pāla - Candra - Varman - Sena records, seem to have been royal officials or servants in the royal court whose relations with the reigning monarch and gradations in status were determined by the assignment of land. The vassal chiefs, who were independent in their own states but owed allegiance to their overlord, honoured the obligation of making regular payment of tributes, in the form of either military contingent or financial support, whereas the officials directly put in charge of some principalities were charged with the responsibility of collecting revenue and making payment of the king's share. In the present context we are concerned with those officials who directly served the king. If they were, like the brahmins, grantees of territories under their jurisdiction, they were likely to enjoy considerable administrative and judicial rights. More so,

21. EI. XXIX, P. 6ff.

when the position of the officials concerned was hereditary. Another category of official grantees was formed by those who served in the Ministry, Army or any other department of the Government.

The epigraphic records of Bengal may suggest the existence of secular holdings granted by the king. But there is nothing to suggest that in case of such holdings, the grantees enjoyed the immunities and concessions accorded to the brahmins. It would be, therefore, reasonable to doubt whether the officials enjoyed economic privileges, comparable to those of the brahmin donees. However, they were responsible, like the Rājukas of Aśokan Edicts, for maintenance of law and order and promotion of agriculture and industries, ensuring return of larger amount of revenue. The secular assignees constituted, no doubt, an intermediary class intervening between Svāmin (lord or king) and Karṣaka (cultivator).

The land-transactions were made in presence of all those classes whose interests were directly or indirectly involved in the land-economy. Both officials and non-officials, the ruler and the ruled, were involved by the State in sale, purchase and donation of land. Therefore, the land-charters reflect not only gradations in the

bureaucratic hierarchy but also different strata of the society excluding the ruling class.

It appears from the Gupta and Post-Gupta records that the Viṣayapati or the District Administrator, his Advisory Council, Village-officials, members of the Village-Assembly representing the villagers, Record-keepers (Pustapāla) and Karāṇa-Kāyasthas were involved in land-transactions. Actual transfer of land was made under the supervision of the Assembly of the Village-Elders [mahattarādyadhi - karāṇa - kuṭumbibhiḥ pratyavekṣyāṣṭaka - navaka--nalābhyāmapaviñchya Catuṣṣīmollīṅghya ... Dāmodarpur C.P. Inscr. of the time of Budhagupta (482 A.D.), I.10_7.²² But Pustapāla or Record-keeper had the key role to play, as he was supposed to be the final authority to take decision on the application praying for purchase of land. Because, he was in a position to assess the position of the land in question, whether it had already been sold away, anybody had prior claim to it, the local government had fixed the price for the land to be sold, or the government had any vested interest in it.

Among the non-official elements, we find reference to the representatives of the mercantile and artisan classes

22. CBI., P. 59.

namely, Nagaraśreṣṭhī (President of the merchants' guild) and Prathamakulika (Chief of the artisans), who were the members of the District Advisory Board during the Gupta period.²³ Again, Mahattaras seem to have played an important part in land-transactions. The Viṣayamahattara finds mention in the Faridpur Copper-plate Grants of Dharmāditya and Samācāradeva. Along with the Viṣayamahattaras are mentioned the Chief traders mahattarāḥ pradhānavyāpārīṇaḥ, Faridpur C.P. of Gopacandra 7²⁴ who might have intervened in the matter of land-transaction, as it was sometimes through their honour that the purchaser could buy the land for donation Icchāmyaḥ bhavatām prasādā-ccirāvasanna - khilabhū - khaṇḍalakam 7.²⁵ In the Mallasārul C.P. of Vijayasena mention is made of Mahattaras belonging to different agrahāra villages located in a particular vīthī Vakkataka - vīthī - sambaddhārdha - karakāgrahārīṇamahattarāḥ ... 1.5 7.²⁶ Mahattaras along with Brahmins and Kuṭumbins were responsible to the Village-administration. They seem to have been attached to the Aṣṭakulādhikaraṇa, that is, the Village-Council consisting of eight (or more)

23. Dāmodarpur Copper-plates, SI. Vol. I, PP. 284, 286.

24. Ibid., P. 358.

25. Ghugrāhātī Grant of Samācāradeva, EI. XVIII, P. 74.

26. SI. Vol. I, P. 360.

members representing various classes or communities of people²⁷ mahattarādyastakulādhikaraṇa²⁸. The participation of these local non-official or semi-official elements is of much significance. If the king was the owner of the land, the question may be raised, why he could not alienate the land without the consent of the people's representatives, namely, the Brahmins, Mahattaras and Kuṭumbins. The tradition of Community ownership of land appear to have been still fresh in the memory of the society.

But a Grāmika or village-headman was at the top of administration of each village. According to Manu, the king should appoint village-headman who should be fed with food, drinks and fuels which the villagers were to supply to the king grāmasyādhipatiṁ kuryāt; Yāni rājapradeyāni pratyaham grāmaśibhiḥ Annapānendhanādāni grāmikastānyavāpnuyāt²⁹. He was usually remunerated by rent-free land and could also get a number of petty dues in kind which the villagers were to pay to the government.

27. IEG., P. 32.

28. Dāmodarpur C.P. no. 3, SI. Vol. I, P. 324.

29. MS. VII. 115, 118.

The Dāmodarpur C.P. (no. 3) of the time of Budhagupta refers to Grāmika, apart from Aṣṭakulādhikaraṇa headed by Mahattaras and Kuṭumbins etc. [mahattarādyāṣṭakulādhi - karaṇa - grāmika - kuṭumbinaśca ... 1.3_7]. Even Grāmika was primarily the representative of the Village-community and then a royal servant. He was probably elected by the Village-Assembly consisting of respectable village-householders and was then appointed administrative head of the village. Defence of the village and the collection of revenue were his primary duties. The Jātakas inform us that neither the Village-headman nor the Village-Accountant (Pustapāla) ruled over the Village-community. The village headman was advised by the Village-elders (Mahattaras). But from the Gupta period onwards, the Village-Council, comprising the Mahattaras, appears to have developed into a regular body like Aṣṭakulādhikaraṇa³⁰. The existence of the Village-Council consisting of the Mahattaras is borne out by the expression Mahattarādyadhikaraṇa occurring in the Dāmodarpur C.P. (no. 3) of Budhagupta.

From the records of the Pāla period, it appears that land-transactions were conventionally witnessed by different

30. cf. Dhanāidaha C.P. of Kumāragupta I, Dāmodarpur C.P. (no. 3), SI. Vol. I, PP. 280, 324.

classes included in the village-community, from the brahmins down to the outcastes like Medas, Andhras and Caṇḍālas.

[PrativāsinoBrāhmaṇottarāṁśca Mahottamottama - kuṭumbipuroga - medāndhra - caṇḍāla - paryantān] 7.³¹ As the donated lands were located in villages, the villagers, their representative and officials including Grāmapati were naturally given recognition by the State. Those whose interests were directly involved in land-transactions were Kṣetrakaras or Karṣakas (i.e. cultivator). They seem to have been mostly recruited from among the tribal forest-dwelling people (vanecarāḥ) like the Medas and the Andhras, often referred to in the Pāla land-charters.

The land-economy of ancient Bengal was characterised by social gradation of different strata belonging to the land-owning class. While the king was at the top of this hierarchical structure, at the bottom remained the large population of cultivators (Karṣakas). Feudal chiefs like Rājā, Rājanaka, Mahāsāmanta, Sāmanta, Mahāmāṇḍalika and Māṇḍalika stood immediately below the king in the scale of social hierarchy. Due to lack of adequate evidence at our disposal, it is difficult to suggest any ranking among the feudal chiefs on the basis of quantum of landed property under their possession. However, Mahāmahattaras or Mahattamas

31. Bāṅgaḍa C.P. of Mahipala I, 11. 41-42, CBI., P. 202.

who possessed vast tracts of land seem to have been placed between Māṇḍalika and Mahattaras, the leading chiefs in the villages. Literally, Mahattara means elders [of a town or village]. According to Stein, Mahattara (Rājatarāṅgini, Vii. 659) was a chamberlain, a village-headman or head of a family or community and a member of the Village-Council³². In the Corpus of Bengal inscriptions, Mahattaras figure both as village-elders³³ as well as prominent persons in towns (Viṣayamahattara)³⁴. The appellations, Mahattara and Mahāmahattara, attached with the names of Village-Elders seem to have suggested their economic status based on landed property. Those settled in the towns or cities seem to have taken to trade, industry and banking as their economic pursuits. The Mahattaras in villages realised their share of the produce from the cultivators on contract or had their lands cultivated by daily-wage labourers. Just below the Mahattaras were the Kuṭumbins or householders who were

32. IEG., P. 191, cf. Mahattama in U.P., Mahattaras in Mahārāṣṭra, Mahājanas in Karṇāṭaka ; A.S. Altekar, State and Government in ancient India, Delhi, 1958, P. 228.

33. Dāmodarpur C.P. (no. 3), CBI., P. 59.

34. Faridpur C.P. of Dharmāditya, Ibid., P. 75.

probably owners of smaller plots of land. The term Kuṭumbin originally stood for the head of the house-hold (gr̥hapati or gr̥hin). In the Jātaka literature, both the terms Gahapati and Kuṭumbika occur to indicate the landowning and mercantile class. So far as the epigraphic records are concerned, the currency of these two terms varied from time to time. In the pre-Gupta inscriptions, the term Gr̥hapati was extensively used, while the term Kuṭumbin was rarely used. On the other hand, in the inscriptions, from the Gupta period onward, the latter gets wide circulation with the disappearance of the former. Kuṭumbin may, therefore, be used as a substitute of Gr̥hapati, that is, head of the family and householder thereby. But Kuṭumbin, occurring in the Bengal epigraphs, seems to have formed the rural population and represented ~~only~~ the land-owning class only and not the mercantile class as it is indicated in the Jātaka literature. At best, it may be well assumed that with the decline of trade and commerce and growth of agrarian economy, Kuṭumbins belonging to mercantile class gradually shifted their interest from trade and commerce to agriculture. According to a Japanese scholar, Yamazaki Toshio, Kuṭumbin, occurring in the Bengal epigraphs, should be translated as peasants³⁵. But, in view of the derivative

35. Acta Asiatica, Pt. 43 (1982), Tokyo, pp 24ff.

meaning of the word, Kuṭumbin (Head of the family or Kuṭumba), the term should not be translated as peasant. Moreover, in the Pāla-Sena land-grants, peasantry is specifically represented by the term Karṣaka or Kṣetrakara.

As Kuṭumbins were dependent upon agriculture, they were in close contact with land which they got cultivated either by employing hired labourers or employed themselves in cultivation. In view of their landed property, they may be regarded as peasant-proprietors.

A section of the landed gentry was represented by the new land-owning class emerging due to liberal donation of land to the Brāhmaṇas or the guardians of the Buddhist Church.

As already pointed out, the lowest stratum in the land-based hierarchy was formed by the Karṣakas or kṣetrakaras, that is, free peasants, share-croppers and hired labourers. The big land-owners presumably had their lands cultivated by the share-croppers or hired labourers. The lowest stratum accommodated the largest population. Smaller in number were the people belonging to the land-owning class. Smallest in number were the feudal lords directly serving under the king who was at the apex of a pyramidal social structure.

There appears to have been a line of demarcation between the feudal chiefs or feudatories and the landed gentry. Rājā, Rājanaka, Mahāsāmanta, Sāmanta etc. used to render military service and pay customary tributes to the king in lieu of the opportunity granted to them to enjoy territories under their possession, whereas Mahāmahattaras, Mahattaras, Kuṭumbins etc. were under the obligation to make payment of land-revenue to the king annually at a fixed rate. Although they were not royal servants, they sometimes rendered service to the king when called for. The religious donees, however, enjoyed rent-free holdings and were entitled to a number of concessions and thus occupied the most privileged position in the society.

Theory of feudalism : Political aspect

It has been suggested by Prof. R. S. Sharma that the growth of powers and privileges belonging to the landed intermediaries from the Gupta period onwards, paved the way towards the rise of feudalism in ancient Bengal as in other parts of North India. Feudalism, as it was in medieval Europe, stands for a system based on land-tenure implying a "contractual but indissoluble bond between service and

land-grant, between personal obligation and real right"³⁶. What is most important is the socio-economic content of the "obligation", which connects the direct producer and his immediate superior or overlord. The political essence of feudalism lies in the organisation of the whole administrative structure on the basis of land and its economic essence is to be traced in the institution of serfdom in which peasants are attached to the soil held by the landed intermediaries placed between the king and the actual tillers, who had to pay rent in kind and labour to them. It is in the light of such broad features of feudalism that some scholars have attempted to trace the origin and development of the system in ancient Bengal. But feudalism has been defined from various points of view by different scholars. As for example Martin Gibbs³⁷ in his "Feudal Order" has suggested the main characteristics of feudalism thus : (a) A low level of technique in which the instruments of production are simple and generally inexpensive, and an act of production is largely individual in character, the division of labour being of a very primitive level of

36. D.C.Sircar (Ed.), Land system and Feudalism in ancient India, University of Calcutta, 1966, P. 52.

37. D.D.Kosambi, An Introduction to the study of Indian History, Bombay, 1975, PP. 353-54.

development, (b) Production for the immediate use of a household or a village community and not a wider market, (c) "Demsne farming" on the lord's estate often on a considerable scale by compulsory labour service, (d) Political decentralisation, (e) Conditional holding of land by lords on some kind of service tenure. According to Dr. R. S. Sharma, an exponent of the theory of feudalism in India, the political aspect of feudalism is revealed through decentralisation of administration, delegation of power to provincial and local officials including those of districts (Viṣayapati) and villages (Grāmapati).³⁸ The title of the provincial governors such as Bhogika, Bhogapati, Bhuktipati smack of feudal relations. It is suggested that the territorial unit called bhukti may have been meant for the enjoyment of the governor under whose charge it was placed. The evidence of the Gupta records found in Bengal shows that Uparika in charge of bhukti was higher in status than the district officer (Viṣayapati Kumārāmātya), and the latter seems to have been the subordinate of the former and appointed by him [Uparika - Cirātadattasya bhogenānu^Vbhā-
mānaka - Koṭi - varṣaviṣaye tanniyuktaka - kumārāmātya -
Vetravarmaṇya - dhiṣṭhānādhikaraṇaṇca]³⁹. It has been suggested that the authority of the provincial governor

38. R.S.Sharma, Indian Feudalism, Calcutta, 1965, PP. 2-5.

39. Dāmodarpur C.P. (no. 2) of the time of Kumārāgupta I, SI. Vol. I, PP. 285-86.

(Uparika) over the district (viṣaya) is indicated by the significant expression anuvahamānaka - Koṭivarṣaviṣaye which may be explained as "The district of Koṭivarṣa bearing the burden of maintenance" of the Government. Further, the expression hastyaśvajana - bhogena⁴⁰ is explained to suggest that the district officer contributed to the enjoyment of the governor either by supplying elephants, cavalry and infantry or by defraying the cost of their maintenance. Thus, it would appear that the viṣaya of Koṭivarṣa had to bear the burden of maintaining the governor's forces. It is argued that the Gupta emperor hardly enjoyed direct allegiance of the district-officers who were more attached to their immediate lord rather than to their overlord. Dr. Sharma, however, does not equate the provincial governors and officer-in-charge of districts with feudal barons of medieval Europe. The land-grants refer to the presence of district-officers on the occasion of land-transactions indicating the recognition of the king's authority upto the district level. The growing hereditary character of the provincial governors, from the Gupta period onwards, however, undermined the central authority and tended to feudalise the administration. Names of the Uparika ending with 'datta' in the Gupta epigraphs of Bengal reasonably suggest that

40. Dāmodarpur C.P. (no. 5), Ibid. P. 338.

they belonged to the same family. Theoretically, the emperor enjoyed the power of dismissing his officials, but in practice, they remained in office on hereditary basis because of their local power. They further gained in power and influence because of the practice of combining several offices in the same person. Thus, in the Guṇaighar C.P. of Vainyagupta, we find Mahāsāmanta Vijayasena serving in different capacities [/ Mahāpratīhāra - mahāpīlupati - pañcādhikaraṇoparika - pāṭayuparika mahārāja - śrīmahā-sāmanta Vijayasena]⁴¹ It indicates that he was the sole authority in his own jurisdiction.

Another facet of political feudalism is manifest in delegation of power to the religious beneficiaries in respect of giving punishment to those committing ten offences [/ daśāparādhaḥ or daśāpacāraḥ]⁴². Thus, the practice of transferring the right of implementing the criminal law and conducting justice to the donee further tended to feudalise the state-apparatus. The grant of villages to the priests is compared to the practice of giving benefices to the Church in medieval Europe with the difference that brahmins, temples or monasteries did hardly form an organised group in India. It appears, however,

41. Ibid. P. 333.

42. CBI. PP. 202, 101.

from the long list of designations of officials in the Pāla records that the greater part of the Pāla kingdom in Bengal and Bihar was administered by the officers directly appointed by the king.

By the 11th - 12th centuries A.D. feudalistic structure of administration was apparent in the rise of a number of semi-independent principalities resulting from the widespread practice of leasing out territories to the vassals and officials who entrenched themselves territorially and ended up as independent potentates. The Kamauli Grant⁴³ of Vaidyadeva shows that Vaidyadeva, who served under Kumārapāla, had become practically independent towards the last days of the Pāla empire and himself granted two villages in Prāggyotiṣabhukti, without the formal endorsement by his overlord. Apparently, the ministerial staff had increased its landed property as a result of successive grants from the Pāla kings and had ultimately shaken off their control. In spite of numerous references to the term Sāmanta and its various synonyms, it is suggested that the earlier texts do not provide any ideological basis for political feudalism, implying that it had not taken any deep root before the 11th century A.D. Moreover, the system did not develop at the same rate in different parts of India.

43. Ibid. P. 377.
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Conditions in Eastern India were different from those in Gujrat and Rajasthan. The comparative absence of secular copper-plate charters under the Pālas and Senas suggests that ordinarily royal functionaries or feudal lords were not allowed to become powerful enough to claim an ever-lasting right to the lands granted to them, as was the case under other ruling dynasties of North India in early medieval period.

Criticism :

There is no denying the fact that delegation of power and the practice of leasing out territories to the vassals and local officials might enable them to grow in power in their own jurisdiction. But, except in a few cases, they could hardly achieve such power as to assert independent authority. References to the Gupta kings as immediate overlords of the Uparikas, as found in the Dāmodarpur Copper-plates, suggest the continuity of the royal authority of the Guptas in Bengal in spite of the growing power of the provincial governors (Uparikas). The exhortation that one-sixth of the religious merit accrued from the pious act of land-donation goes to the king also points to the legal right of the king. Moreover, as it has already been noted above, the vassal chiefs had to seek

the king's permission to let out a portion of land out of their own property as religious endowment, an instance which expressly proves the king's supreme authority over his subordinates. It has, however, been admitted by Dr. Sharma that the long list of officials enumerated in the Pāla - Sena records indicates that the greater part of the kingdom was administered by the royal functionaries who made central authority felt in all the administrative units including the village (cf. Grāmapaṭi, Pustapāla, Cāṭa, Bhaṭa). Transfer of judicial right to the religious beneficiaries apparently feudalised the state-apparatus. But those beneficiaries were not charged with unlimited power, as they were not entitled to the right to alienate the land donated to them. Moreover, there was no bond of political obligation on the part of the donees to the king. Besides, the proportion of the gifted land in comparison to Crown-land was so meagre that the power of limited landed intermediaries in the donated land did not have much impact upon the body-politic and could hardly feudalise the relations between the king and the newly grown landed aristocracy.

Theory of feudalism : Economic aspect

The economic aspect of feudalism is related to the emergence of privileged landed intermediaries leading to

the subservience of the peasantry. According to Dr.Sharma, the landed intermediaries including the priestly class as well as the royal functionaries, being assigned or remunerated by land, became for all practical purposes, occupiers and enjoyers of the villages. Thus, they formed a class of feudal lords. The growing power of the privileged intermediaries, it is suggested, reduced the position of the peasants to that of serfs, a characteristic feature of the European feudal economy, in which peasants were bonded to the soil but did not own it. The most important factor which tended to depress the position of the tenants was the practice of subinfeudation. The grantees were authorised to cultivate the land themselves or get it cultivated. When they were granted a number of villages or sizeable amount of land, they had to get them cultivated by temporary tenants (Karṣakas) or hired labourers (Karmakara). In this case, the grantees might have assigned a part of their land or revenue to the sub-tenants. The terms of transfer indicate that generally plots of land were not cultivated by the brahmins but by temporary tenants. The rise and growth of land-owning monastic institutions by the grant of agrahāras was liable to subinfeudation. Sometimes, large number of agrahāras were granted as endowment by the king to the Brahmins and Buddhist monks for meeting the expenses

of maintaining the centres of religion and education. Land might, therefore, have been assigned to temporary tenants for cultivation. As a result of subinfeudation, the number of free peasants were falling off, giving rise to the temporary tenants under the landed intermediaries. Another factor which reduced the peasants to servile position was, according to Dr. Sharma, the imposition of new taxes. The Pāla-grants enumerate a number of taxes to be paid by the villagers to the donee [Kṣetrakarai-ścājñāśravaṇa - vidheyīrbhūya yathākālāṃ samucita - bhāga - bhoga - kara - hiraṇyādi - sarva - pratyāyopanayaḥkārya iti].⁴⁴ Except for certain taxes specified in the list, others have remained as yet unidentified. The expression sarvapratyāya is interpreted to suggest " all sources of revenue. " The grantees were within their rights in levying new impositions of taxes which might worsen the economic position of the peasants. Although 'forced labour' (viṣṭi) is hardly referred to in the land grants of Bengal, it might have been covered by the expression sarvapīḍā to which the villagers were often subjected and which the king relinquished in favour of the donee [parihṛtasarvapīḍaḥ].⁴⁵ Again, a number of concessions, extended to

44. Bhāgalpur C.P. of Nārāyaṇapāla, Ibid., P. 168.

45. Bāṅgaḍa C.P. of Mahīpāla I, 1.44, Ibid., P. 202.

the donees by the charters, [- svasīmā - tṛṇayūti -
gocaraparyantaḥ satalaḥ soddeśaḥ sāmramadhukaḥ sajalas-
thalaḥ sagartoṣaraḥ sajhātaviṭapaḥ ...]⁴⁶ deprived the
village-community of the rights to enjoy the pasture,
jungle, trees, water reservoirs etc. On the other hand,
the right of the donees to the enjoyment of these further
enabled them to levy tax on the peasants for making use
of them. In these circumstances, the condition of peasants
was reduced to that of serfs of medieval Europe.

Endowments of villages with all its natural resources
created, according to Sharma, permanent "feuds" (villages)
which served as nerve - centres of economic life. The
growth of self-sufficient rural economy was buttressed by
lesser use of coins and decline of trade. The decline of
trade and commerce during the Pāla period is indicated by
the paucity of coins. Coin-denominations, like Drammas or
Purāṇas mentioned in the Pāla grants, can hardly suggest
the circulation of coins of such denominations. An exchange
of commodities being limited to a great extent, the
villages inhabited by brahmins, mixed-castes and low-caste
people like Medas, Andhras and Caṇḍālas developed into
self-sufficient economic units. The mixed-castes adopted

46. Mānāhali C.P. of Madanapāla, 1.40, Ibid., P. 215.

various arts and crafts, the lower castes were involved in either cultivation or some degraded occupations and the Brahmins only enjoyed the fruits of others' labour in lieu of religious service. The villages, granted for the maintenance of the temples and monasteries, also helped to sustain the self-sufficient economy. Dr.Sharma distinguishes the period from A.D. 1000 - 1200 as that of climax and decline of feudal economy. The charters of Bengal specify the yield in cash [samvatsarena kapardakāṣṭa-
ṣaṣṭipurāṇādhikaśata - mūlyotpattiko Dāpanīyāpāṭakaḥ] ⁴⁷ and demarcate the boundaries of the donated land in precise terms. It shows, according to him, that the colonising activities of the beneficiaries were restricted. The gradual increase in the use of coins during this period points to the possibility of peasants purchasing freedom from imposed labour by paying money. The Sena grants often mention the income of the produce out of the donated land in terms of the Purāṇa ⁴⁸ coin. Joining of villages to the urban centres seem to have caused dents in the self-sufficient economy of the rural areas. Moreover, the need of surplus produce for the urban people involved a good volume of internal trade between towns and villages which must have shaken the stagnancy of the village-economy.

47. Mādhāinagar C.P. of Lakṣmaṇasena, IB., P. 112.

48. CBI., PP. 274, 281, 291.

Criticism of the theory :

A closer study of Bengal epigraphs would show that landed intermediaries did not maintain feudal relations with the king so much as the feudal barons did in Europe. Contract or obligation which characterised European feudalism was hardly present in the case of donees or assignees of land in ancient Bengal. Numerous land-charters of Bengal record land-grants to the religious beneficiaries without stipulating any obligation of the donees to the donors. The motive of the State-patronage towards liberal donation of land to the Brahmins was not only economic but also socio-religious in character. The king aimed at economic development by bringing more and more waste-land under cultivation. Again, he patronised the study of the Vedas and performance of Vedic rites and rituals. The land-donation was such a meritorious act, according to the Dharmaśāstras, that the one-sixth of the religious merit accruing from performance of rites and rituals was deposited to the credit of the donor ∫dharmaṣaḍbhāgopa-cayo-asmākaṃ⁴⁹. It was such as a ceremonial function on an auspicious day after taking sacred bath in the river ∫Viṣuvatsamkrāntau vidhivat Gaṅgāyāṃ snātvā śāsanīkṛtya pradattoasmābhiḥ,

49. Mallasārul C.P. of Vijayasena, Ibid., P. 88.

Bāṅgaḍa C.P. of Mahīpāla-I 7. Again, the European 'manor' comprising a cluster of villages can not be traced in ancient Bengal. The members of the priestly class, except in cases of religious establishments like temples or monasteries, were donated some pieces or plots of land. The view in regard to the emergence of serfdom in Bengal as a result of repression meted out to them by the land-owning class appears to be an exaggeration of the reality. In Bengal epigraphs, we can hardly trace even an indirect hint to suggest that the tillers were ever obliged to be tied down to the soil they cultivated under the intermediaries. The grant of a village did not necessarily reduce the position of its peasants to that of bonded labourers. On the contrary, the donee had no right to eject the peasants from the village at his own will. What did actually happen in case of donation was the transfer of revenue from the State to the new land-owner.

The system of subinfeudation does not seem to have been familiar at least to those who drafted the land-charters on which we are to depend. The Brahmins might have had their lands cultivated by temporary tenants. But nothing is known about terms and conditions of such tenancy. The villages, belonging to the trustees of temples or monasteries, were not small plots of land and were, therefore,

allotted to some of the ministerial staff in lieu of their services rendered to those religious institutions. For instance, the Paśchimbhāg C.P.⁵⁰ of Śrīcandra records allotment of small plots of land to Brāhmaṇa, Gaṇaka, Kāyastha, Mālākāra, Tailika, Kumbhakāra, Karmakāra, Sūtradhāra, Kāhalika, Śaṅkhavādaka, Rajaka, Nāpita, Carmakāra etc. who catered to the daily needs of the religious institution.

That imposition of new taxes reduced the peasants to a servile position can hardly be inferred from the list of taxes found in the records, namely, bhāga - bhoga - kara - hiraṇyādi - sarva - pratyāyopanaya etc.⁵¹ Both the expressions ādi or sarva seem to have been used to indicate conventional taxes including bhāga, bhoga, kara and hiraṇya. Those two terms might also be considered to be adjuncts used by the composer of the record for

50. EDEP., P. 67.

51. (a) Bhāga: King's share of the one-sixth of the produce in grains of tenant's field; (b) Bhoga: periodical supplies made by the tenants to the king; (c) Kara: tax in general for enjoying royal land by using it for cultivation or emergency tax levied upon the villagers over and above the normal grain share; (d) Hiraṇya: tax in cash, IEG., PP. 47, 48, 145, 129.

maintaining the balance of versification. No doubt, the immunities from such taxes granted to the priestly class exalted them to a privileged position. The most privileged position of the Brahmins, as laid down in the Smṛtis, was customarily upheld by the rulers, as their concept of social order was based upon the legal texts. Whatever that might be, the king did not lose his sovereign authority in his own kingdom by allowing liberal donation of lands to Brahmins. The officials, referred to in the Pāla-Sena records, seem to have discharged their functions for the consolidation of the royal authority in different parts of the kingdom.

The tax known as Viṣṭi (forced labour) can hardly be traced in the expression sarvapiḍā as suggested by Dr.Sharma. Even if it be so explained, it has to be borne in mind that the donated villages were free from sarvapiḍā [parihṛta - sarvapiḍā] as pointed out before. It appears, therefore, that the peasants living under the donees were free from oppressions perpetrated by the policy of squeezing forced labour. The question of forced labour comes in when the land-owner reserves some Khās lands for himself and leases out other lands to the tenants. Dr.Sharma himself suggests that the Brahmins had always their lands

cultivated by the Karṣakas, and there is nothing to show that they reserved any part of the land owned by them.

There was no transfer of community-rights to the grantee, as suggested by Dr. Sharma. Although the grant was made along with the right to various natural resources, it did not confer the right of appropriating community-properties like irrigation - tank, jungle, pasture - land, temples etc. When the king donated a village, he transferred his right of taxation to the donees, but, the villagers continued to enjoy the community-rights. The king remained the owner of mines, minerals like salt, orchards and also of treasure-troves to which the donees had no right.

The theory of self-sufficient economy buttressed by dearth of coins deserves critical analysis. Firstly, the absence of coin-finds is not a positive evidence of the paucity of the currency. The Pāla records refer to Dramma⁵² and Purāṇa. Moreover, reference to tax-payment in cash (hiranya) as mentioned in the Pāla writs presupposes the existence of some form of currency. Besides, there was hardly any real dearth of cowrie-shells which were extensively used as medium of exchange in the Gupta period.

52. Mahābodhi Inscr. of Dharmapāla, CBI., P. 112.

Besides, Damma stood in relation to cowrie (Barāṭaka) as a higher denomination in Bhāskarācārya's Līlāvatī. It is said that twenty Varāṭakas (Kaḍi) were equal to one Kākinī (paisa), four Kākinīs to one Paṇa (anna), sixteen paṇas to one Damma (rupee) and sixteen Dammās to one Niṣka [Varāṭakānām daśakadvayam yat sā kākinī tāśca paṇāścataśrah | Te ṣoḍaśadamma ihāvagamya drammais-tathā ṣoḍaśabhiśca niṣkaḥ 7. ⁵³ The Rājataranīnī often speaks of payment of salaries by cowrie-shells. ⁵⁴ Secondly, commercial and cultural contact between Bengal and South-east Asian countries, that had its beginning in the early centuries of the Christian era, continued in the Pāla period, as it is evident from the Nālandā C.P. of Devapāla. Thirdly, the dearth of coins bearing the names of Pāla rulers would imply that the Pāla kings did not feel the necessity of issuing fresh coins, as there had been in circulation plenty of 'Gupta imitation' coins in the market. The argument regarding abolition of the practice of exchange of commodities on the ground of mere paucity of coins is least convincing.

53. Ibid., P. 114.

54. D.C. Sircar, op. cit., P. 59.

To sum up, the theory of feudalism has been subjected to criticism in the light of epigraphic data. Feudal trends may be traced occasionally in the polity and economy of ancient Bengal. The chain of obligations or contracts, that determines the feudal social order, can hardly be traced between the king and the land-owning class or between the landed gentry and the peasants. It is true that the provincial governors wielded considerable power in their own administrative units. But they rarely achieved an independent status snapping all political ties with the imperial authority. Further, the long list of officials, occurring in the Bengal epigraphs from the 8th century onwards, shows to what extent the king with his Central government maintained successfully his suzerainty over the remotest parts of the kingdom. The decline of the Pāla power was occasionally signalled by the rise of ambitious vassal chiefs to power. In spite of their semi-independent status, the vassal chiefs consistently followed the policy of owing allegiance to their Pāla overlord. The vassals, referred to in Sandhyākaranandin's Rāmacaritam, can hardly be confused with the feudal barons. Depreciation in the status of free peasants may be reasonably explained by the growth of power and privileges of the intermediary land-owning class. But the system of subinfeudation or serfdom cannot be derived from the epigraphic records discovered so far in Bengal.

The waning state of trade and commerce is, no doubt, evident from the conspicuous absence of the merchants and traders representing a social class in the epigraphic records from the 8th century onward. They seem to have suffered significantly the loss of state-recognition that they had been accorded in the epigraphs of the Gupta period found in North Bengal. This might have been the result of an unprecedented emphasis on the agrarian economy which is reflected in the large number of Pāla-Sena land-grants. Significantly enough, the cultivator-class (Karṣaka or Kṣetrakara) is for the first time mentioned in the Pāla epigraphs. The expansion of agrarian economy did not necessarily develop a self-sufficient economy at the village-level, as the system of exchange of commodities did not cease to exist. The Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla records the grant of four villages with a common marketplace (haṭṭikā), where the products from different villages seem to have been sold and purchased. The socio-economic set-up, deriving its strength or weakness from the land-owning aristocracy, has been labelled by scholars like D.C. Sircar as land-lordism, as the characteristic features of feudalism can hardly be traced in it.

In view of what has already been said regarding immunities and concessions granted to the donees, it

is not unreasonable to hold that the emergence of the land-owning class, with special power and privileges, tended to feudalise the social order to some extent, to decentralise the power of the king and to reduce the position of the peasantry. This feudialistic trend was evidently recognised in the social hiererchy in ancient Bengal. A sense of obligation on the part of the cultivators to the land-owners seems to have been recognised, although the land-owning class was not apparently bound by any obligation to or contract with the king. There was no feudal social order in ancient or early medieval Bengal as it was in medieval Europe. But the social order in Bengal recognised a hierarchy in both political and economic life. The hierarchy had an apparent, but not real, resemblance with the feudal social structure.

CHAPTER V

Social Structure : Rural and Urban

The protagonists¹ of the theory of the Asiatic mode of production emphasize upon the fact that the society in India was mainly rural in character, being based upon self-sufficient agrarian economy backed by small industries and handicrafts. The self-sufficient character of the village economy, according to them, reduced the necessity of the system of exchange and circulation of money. The rural society was, therefore, disconnected with the outer world, not to speak of the urban settlements that were mainly based upon manufacturing industries. It has been further added that the villages, being inhabited by tax-paying peasants, had no direct relation with the State-authority and that the position of the cultivators was reduced to that of bonded labourers tied down to the soil under the obligation of providing levies of compulsory labour and produces to the State. It appears, therefore, that the entire society was divided into two classes, namely, the ruling authority and the vast mass of peasantry.

1. Lawrence Krader, The Asiatic Mode of Production, Assen, The Netherlands, 1975, P. 286ff.

The generalisations made by the theorists with regard to the societies in pre-colonial India, needless to say, require a fresh scrutiny in the light of the data furnished by the contemporary records, the epigraphs. Whereas the above theory has been made applicable to whole India over a long period of time, we may attempt to examine it in the context of Eastern India, covering mainly Bengal and Bihar during the period from the 4th century B.C. to the 13th century A.D.

The available epigraphic records indicate that there were two types of society, simultaneously existent, namely, the rural society and the urban society. Our study would show that the total character of the society in ancient Bengal can be comprehended by taking an integrated view of the rural and urban societies.

Rural Society :

The rural society was not of the same character in all villages. Villages might be broadly divided into two categories, viz., rent-free donated villages and undonated rent-paying villages. Copperplate grants show that from the Gupta period onwards, plots of land or even a cluster

of villages were granted to the priestly class, either to the Brahmins or to the Buddhist monks, to the temples or monasteries. These were all perpetual endowments accorded by the State.

Epigraphic data :

The Dāmodarpur Copper-plates² of the Gupta period record purchase of one or two kulyavāpas of land by the Brahmins for their own religious purposes, or, by some ✓ individuals who donated the purchased land to the members of the priestly class and to the religious institutions like temples. The Baigrām C.P.³ records land-donation to the temple of Govindasvāmin by private donors in Baigrām. The Pāhārpur C.P. Inscr.⁴ (159 G.E.) records donation of one kulyavāpa and four Droṇavāpas of land in the villages of Vaṭagohālī, Prṣṭhimapottaka, Goṣāṭapuñja and Nitvagohālī for the worship of Jaina monk Ācārya Guhanandin in the Vihāra. Although these are all sale-deeds, the transaction

2. CBI., PP. 45,47.

3. Ibid., P. 50.

4. Ibid., P. 54, EI. XX, P. 61ff.

is made, according to the rule of Akṣayanīvī, by which the donees were entitled to enjoy the revenue of the gift-land in perpetuity without the right of destroying or alienating it. In some land-grants the exemption from revenue is expressly mentioned by the term samudayavāhy-ādyastambakhila-kṣetrāṇāmakiñcitpratīkarāṇām⁵. The Guṇaighar C.P. Inscr.⁶ of Vainyagupta (G.E. 188) records eleven pāṭakas of land donated as an agrahāra to the Buddhist monasteries in honour of Mahāyānika preceptor Śāntideva in Udakagrāma.

The Post-Gupta land^C-charters refer to Akṣayanīvī, but not in all cases. For example, the Vappaghoṣavāṭa C.P. Grant⁷ of Jayanāga records the donation as per established rule of Akṣayanīvī. It records the grant of village Vappaghoṣavāṭa to a Brahmin of Kāśyapa gotra by Sāmanta Nārāyaṇabhadra. Three Copper-plate grants⁸ found at Faridpur, two of the time of king Dharmāditya and one belonging to that of king Gopacandra, record land-donations

5. Baigram C.P. Inscr. of the Gupta year 128 (=448 A.D.),
CBI., P. 50.

6. SI. Vol.I, P. 331.

7. EI. XVIII, P. 60ff.

8. SI. Vol.I, PP. 363, 367, 370, IA. 1910, PP. 195, 200, 204.

to the Brahmins in the village of Dhruvilāṭi and nearer villages. These plots of land are said to have been sold to the donor by the government according to the rule of granting Copper-plate charters [Tāmrapaṭṭadharmanā, Faridpur C.P. 7] which entitle the donee to the perpetual enjoyment of the rent-free holding. The Ghugrāhāṭi C.P.⁹ of Samācāradeva records endowment of the whole of the village Vyāghracoraka minus three kulyavāpas, which had already been donated to someone else, to Brāhmaṇa Supratīkasvāmin for the performance of bali, caṃu and satra rites. The Mallasārul C.P. Grant¹⁰ of King Vijayasena (6th century A.D.) donates 8 kulyavāpas of land in the village of Vetragarttā in the Vakkatakavīthī of Vardhamānabhukti to Brāhmaṇa Vatsasvāmin on behalf of king Vijayasena for the daily performance of five sacrifices [Pañcamahāyaj-ñapravartanāya]. A vast tract of forest land lying in Suvvuṅgaviṣaya in the easternmost region in Eastern Bengal had been donated to more than two hundred Brahmins for the worship of the god Anantanārāyaṇa by the land-charter of Lokanātha¹¹ (C. 7th-9th century A.D.) found in Tippera district. Separate portions of land have been allotted to

9. EI. XVII, P. 74ff.

10. SI. Vol.I, P. 372.

11. Ibid. Vol.II, PP. 29 - 34, EI. XV, P. 306ff.

these learned Brahmins [Caturvidyā-Brāhmaṇānām]. The Kailān C.P. Inscr.¹² of Śrīdhāraṇarāta (6th century A.D.) of Samatāta records gift of several pāṭakas of land to a number of learned Brāhmaṇas for the performance of their pañcamahāyajña in the viṣaya of Guptīnāṭana and Paṭalāyikā, under the jurisdiction of the Kumārāmātya of Devaparvata. The grant was made by the king Śrīdhāraṇarāta at the request of Mahāsāndhivigrahika (Minister of Peace and War) Jayanātha.

Villages were donated to the Vedic Brahmins by the feudatories of Śaśāṅka in Daṇḍabhukti region. The Midnāpore C.P. inscriptions¹³ of the time of Śaśāṅka record the donation of the village Mahākumbhārapadraka and forty dronas of land in the village Ketakapadrika respectively to the Brahmins of different Vedic branches. The Nidhānpur C.P.¹⁴ of Bhāskaravarman records the renewal of the endowment of Mayūrasālmala agrahāra in Candrapurī viṣaya by king Bhāskaravarman. The grant was already made by the king's great great-grandfather Bhūtivarman to more than two hundred Brahmins by a charter which was later destroyed

12. SI. Vol.II, PP. 36-40.

13. Ibid., PP. 24-27.

14. CPS., P. 15.

by fire. The Āshrafpur C.P.s¹⁵ of Devakhaḍga record grant of nine pāṭakas and ten dronavāpas and six pāṭakas exceeded by ten dronavāpas of land to the Buddhist monasteries.

A large number of land-grant charters of the Pāla period record land-donations to the priestly class and religious institutions in different parts of Bengal. The Khalimpur C.P.¹⁶ of Dharmapāla (8th century A.D.) records grant of four villages namely, Krauñcaśvabhra, Mādhāsālmali, Pālitaka and Gopippali in Vyāghrataṭīmaṇḍala of Puṇḍra-vardhanabhukti to the temple of Nannanārāyaṇa for the deity's worship and maintenance by a Lāṭa Brāhmaṇa and other attendants. The Bhāturiyā Grant¹⁷ of Rājyapāla (10th century A.D.) donates the village Madhuśrava in favour of god Vṛṣabhadvaja and some Brahmins on behalf of king Rājyapāla. The Jājilpādā C.P.¹⁸ of the reign of Gopāla II (10th century A.D.) records the gift of two villages namely Koṣṭhagrha and Mahārājapallikā in Ānandapura agrahāra in Puṇḍravardhanabhukti to Brāhmaṇa Śrīdharaśarman who used to perform Vedic rites. The Belwā C.P. of Mahīpāla I

15. MASB. I, P. 85ff.

16. CBI., PP. 99-100.

17. EI. XXXIII; P. 150ff.

18. JAS. XVII, P. 137ff.

(10th century A.D.) records land-donations in three localities namely, Osinna Kaivarta-vṛtti, Nandisvāmin and Gaṇeśvara, the lands costing two hundred and ten, four hundred and ninety and one hundred and fifty one purāṇas respectively in favour of a Brahmin named Jīvadharadevaśarman. The Bāṅgaḍa C.P.¹⁹ Grant of Mahīpāla I records the gift of village Kurata pallikā in Kaṭivarṣa viṣaya with the exception of the part known as Cūta-pallikā to Brāhmaṇa Kṛṣṇāditya Śarman.

The Maināmati plates²⁰ of Laḍahacandra and Govindacandra (11th century A.D.) record grant of a few villages in Samataṭa-maṇḍala of Puṇḍravardhanabhukti to the Brahmins. The plate no. 1 records gift of the villages Campāvanī, Bappasimhavoraka and Mahādeva in Pattikera-viṣaya within Samataṭa-maṇḍala. Plate no. 2 records the gift of the village Suravoraka in Peranāṭana viṣaya in Samataṭa-maṇḍala. Plate no. 3 of Govindacandra records endowment of the village Sahara-talāka in the same maṇḍala as stated above.

19. CBI., PP. 201-202.

20. EDEP., PP. 73, 76, 80.

The Irdā C.P.²¹ of Nayapāla (11th century A.D.) grants the village of Br̥haccattīmā in Daṇḍabhuktimāṇḍala of Vardhamānabhukti. A few villages were granted in Varendrī region of Paṇḍravardhanabhukti to the Brāhmaṇa donees during this period by the Pālas and their feudatories. The Belwā C.P. and Āmgāchi C.P.²² of Vigrahapāla III (11th century A.D.) grant the villages of Lovanikāma in Phānita viṣaya and Viṣamapura and Daṇḍatraheśvara in Brāhmaṇīgrāmamaṇḍala of Puṇḍravardhanabhukti respectively. The Ramganj C.P.²³ of Īśvaraghoṣa (11th century A.D.) records the grant of village Digaghāsodikā in Piyollamaṇḍala. The Māhāhali Grant²⁴ of Madanapāla (12th century) records the gift of the village Koṣṭhagiri attached to Halāvarttamaṇḍala in the same viṣaya of Paṇḍravardhanabhukti.

The land-grant charters of the Varman rulers record grant of villages in Eastern Bengal. The Sāmantasāra plate²⁵ of Harivarman (12th century A.D.) refers to the gift of the village of Varaparvata attached to Pañcavāsamāṇḍala of Paṇḍravardhanabhukti. The Belāva C.P.²⁶ of

21. EI. XXII, P. 150ff.

22. EI. XXIX, P. 9ff.; EI. XV, P. 295ff.

23. CBI., P. 362.

24. Ibid., P. 215.

25. EI. XXX, P. 255ff.

26. IB., P. 14ff; EI. XII, P. 37ff.

Bhojavarmadeva records the grant of the village of Upyalikā attached to Kauśāmbī Aṣṭagacchakhaṇḍala in Adhapattanamaṇḍala of Paṇḍravardhanabhukti. The villages seem to have been donated in that part of Puṇḍravardhanabhukti that lay within the territorial jurisdiction of the Varmans ruling in East Bengal.

The practice of land-donation followed in the time of the Pālas, Candras and Varmans went on a much wider scale during the Sena period throughout Bengal. The Barrackpore Grant²⁷ of Vijayasena (12th century A.D.) records the grant of village Bhaṭṭavaḍā attached to Khāḍiviṣaya of Paṇḍravardhanabhukti. Khāḍiviṣaya is located in Diamond Harbour subdivision in the District 24 Parganas, that is, in the southern part of Bengal and must have been included in the Samataṭa region, because the granted land is said to have been measured according to the standard prevalent in Samataṭa. Samataṭīyanalena⁷. The Naiḥāṭī C.P.²⁸ of Vallālasena mentions the village Vāllahitṭhā as gifted village attached to Svalpadaḥṣiṇa-vīthī in Uttara-Rāḍhamaṇḍala of Vardhamānabhukti. The

27. IB., p. 57ff.; EI. XV, p. 278ff.

28. Ibid., pp. 68, 80.

Govindapur C.P.²⁹ and Śaktipur C.P.³⁰ of Lakṣmaṇasena (12th century A.D.) record land-grants to the Brāhmaṇa in the Rādha-region. The first one records the gift of the village Viḍḍāraśāsana attached to Vetaddacaturaka in PaścimaKhāṭikā in Vardhamānabhukti. The Tarpandighi³¹ and Mādhāinagar³² copper plate grants of Lakṣmaṇasena record land-donation in Varendrī. The first one mentions the village of Velahiṣṭi in Varendrī of Paundravardhanabhukti as an endowment to a Brāhmaṇa donee. The second land-charter records the gift of Dāpaniyāpāṭaka in Varendrī to another Brahmana donee. The Sunderban C.P.³³ of Lakṣmaṇasena records grant of a plot of land to Śāntyāgarika in the village of Maṇḍalagrāma along with a homestead, measuring three Bhūdroṇas, one Khāḍika, twenty-three Unmānas and two and a half Kākiṇīs yielding an annual income of fifty Purāṇas, lying within the jurisdiction of Kāntallapura-Caturaka, belonging to Khāḍī-maṇḍala of Paundravardhana-bhukti. The Ānuliā C.P.³⁴ of the same king records the donation of the village of Mātharaṇḍiyā yielding one hundred Kapardakapurāṇas and being attached to Vyāghrataṭī-maṇḍala of Paundravardhanabhukti. The Rājābādi C.P.³⁵ of

29. CBI., P. 274.

30. EI. XXI, P. 211ff.

31. CBI., P. 293; EI. XII, P. 6ff.

32. Ibid., P. 281; JASB. (1909), P. 467ff.

33. IB., P. 169ff.

34. Ibid., 81ff.

35. Ibid., 181ff.

Lakṣmaṇasena refers to the villages of Mādisāhāna and Vasumaṇḍana in Paṇḍravardhanabhukti. According to N.K. Bhattashali, the donated lands lie in the locality on the southern bank of the Bānār River.³⁶ The Calcutta Sāhitya Pariṣat C.P.³⁷ of Viśvarūpasena (12th century A.D.) records grant of eleven plots of lands in six villages to a Brāhmaṇa named Āvallikapamśrīhalāyūdhā. These villages are (1) Rāmasiddhipāṭaka in the Nāvya region of Vaṅga lying in Paṇḍravardhanabhukti, (2) Vinayatilaka in the same region, (3) Ajikulāpāṭaka in Navasam-grahacaturaka in Madhuksīrakavṛtti, (4) Deulahastī attached to Lāuhanḍācaturaka in the Vikramapura division, (5) Ghāghara-kāṭṭi-pāṭaka attached to Urācaturaka in K (?) Andradvīpa and (6) Pātilādivika in the same place. The Madanapādā C.P.³⁸ of the same king records the grant of the village Piñjokāsthī by the king in the Vikramapura division of Vaṅga in Paṇḍravardhanabhukti to Brāhmaṇa Śrī Viśvarūpa-devaśarman. The Edilpur C.P.³⁹ of Keśavasena informs us

36. JRASBL. VIII (1942), PP. 7-17.

37. I.B., P. 140ff; IHQ. II, P. 77ff.;

38. EI. XXXIII, P. 315ff.; IB., P. 132ff.

39. Ibid. XXXIII, P. 320ff.; Ibid., P. 132ff.

of the gift of the village Tālapaḍāpāṭaka by king Keśavasena in the same area as immediately stated before to Brāhmaṇa Śrī Īśvaradevaśarman.

The policy of the Sena rulers was followed by the rulers of other independent kingdoms. The Maināmati C.P.⁴⁰ of Raṇavaṅkamalla of Harikāladeva (13th century A.D.) records land-donation of twenty droṇas in the village of Vejakhaṇḍa in the city of Paṭṭikera in Tippera district. The Mehār C.P.⁴¹ of Dāmodaradeva records the grant of homestead land yielding twentyfive Purāṇas in the village of Mehār in Vāyisagrāmakhanda attached to Paralāyi viṣaya of Samatāṭamaṇḍala in Puṇḍravardhanabhukti to a number of Brāhmaṇas of different gotras. The Sobhārāmpur C.P.⁴² of the same king notifies the grant of three villages in Chātiharakhaṇḍala attached to Miḍilliviṣaya in Samatāṭamaṇḍala of Paṇḍravardhanabhukti.

40. IHQ. IX, P. 286ff.

41. EI. XXVII, P. 187ff.

42. EI. XXX, P. 188.

Rent-free holdings :

A survey of the records would thus show that about thirty eight villages were donated to the priestly class and to those in charge of religious institutions during the Post-Gupta period and afterwards. Besides, numerous plots of land, lying in different villages, were also donated. The plots of donated land gradually increased in size with the expansion of the Brāhmanical settlement in Bengal. Donations were made as perpetual endowment [/Acandrārka-kṣiti-samakālaṃ yāvat_]⁴³ and, sometimes, without the right of alienation [/Akṣayanīvidharmena_].⁴⁴ These were rent-free holdings, according to the principle of bhūmicchidra [/bhūmicchidranyāyena_].⁴⁵ The donees were also exempted from a number of taxes which a village had to pay ordinarily to the State [/sadaśāpacārāḥ akiñcitpragrāhyāḥ parihṛtasarvapīḍā, Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla_]. On the other hand, they were empowered with the right to collect fines from the villagers committing offences [/sadaśāparādhaḥ, Bāgaḍa C.P. of Mahīpāla I_]

43. CBI., P. 168.

44. Ibid., P. 55.

45. Ibid., P. 119.

and were entitled to the enjoyment of revenue exacted from the villagers living in their jurisdiction. The grantees were the land-lords to whom the tillers of the soil (karṣaka) were asked to pay the rent they formerly used to pay to the king. [prativāsibhiḥ kṣetrakaraścā-jñāśravaṇavidheyairbhūtvā samucita-kara-piṇḍakādisarva-pratyāyopa-nayaḥ kārya iti, Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla 7].

The rural society in agrahāras was thus divided into two main classes, namely, land-owners and cultivators. The village-population comprised, according to the Pāla epigraphs, Brahmins and non-Brahmins stratified as Mahattamas (big land-owners), Kuṭumbins (house holders) and the lower castes like Medas, Andhras and Caṇḍālas, who seem to have been included in the class known as Kṣetrakaras (cultivators) [Prativāsino Brāhmaṇottarāṁśca mahottamottama-Kuṭumbi-puroga-medāndhra-caṇḍālaparyantān, Bāṅgaḍa C.P. of Mahīpāla I 7]. The people belonging to non-Brahmin castes used to belong to various occupational castes like Karaṇa [Sakaraṇān prativāsinah, Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla 7].

Although specific mention of other occupations is to be hardly found out in the epigraphs, the existence of black-smiths (Karmakāras), potters (Kumbhakāras), oil men (Tailikas), weavers (Tantuvāyas), cobblers (Carmakāras), washermen (Rajakas), barbers (Nāpitas) may be derived from their services, indirectly or incidentally referred to in the records.

The Brahmins enjoyed the most prestigious status in the village-society. They guided the people in observing sacraments and in performing various rites and rituals. Next to the Brahmins in social hierarchy were Mahattama (village-elders), Mahāmahottama and Kuṭumbin (householder) representing different grades of land-owning class. It appears from the Kalāikuri C.P.⁴⁶ and Jagdishpur C.P.⁴⁷ of the Gupta period and Faridpur copper-plates⁴⁸ of Dharmāditya and Gopacandra that Vithī-mahattara and Viṣaya-mahattara discharged some administrative functions when called for by the State. It is reasonable to hold that the Mahattaras in a village also played an important part in village-administration. The lowest stratum of the village-society was formed by cultivators and artisans who catered to the daily needs of the villagers. The Kṣetrakaras included sharecroppers and the hired labourers. The Medas, Andhras and Caṇḍālas who were regarded as outcastes (Antyajās), living on degraded occupation, generally discharged menial services to the village-society, living on the outskirts of the village. They seem to have had included the 'hired labourer'-group within the Kṣetrakara class. But these

46. SI. Vol.I, P. 352; IHQ. XIX, P. 12ff.

47. EDEP., PP. 61-63.

48. SI. Vol.I, PP. 351, 355, 357-58.

cultivators were not tied down to the soil, as it has been pointed out by the theorists of the Asiatic mode of production. In spite of their remarkably reduced position in the society, they seem to have enjoyed a legal position equal to that of freemen in the society, as they were invited to witness the land-transactions. It is implied that in case of disputes over boundaries of lands, their witness at the law-court, if necessary, was attached with no less importance. The landed aristocracy comprising different grades in the social scale, based upon the quantum of landed property owned by each of them, the peasantry comprising land-owning cultivators, share-croppers and hired labourers, the artisan class consisting of different occupational castes and the outcastes discharging the menial services formed a homogeneous unit of the rural society. The analysis of the class-stratification of the rural society thus militates against the conception of the class-society comprising only the ruling class and the working class, as suggested by the upholders of the theory of the changeless village-society in pre-colonial India.

Village Administration :

The villages donated to the Brahmins seem to have been administered by them, as they are known to have enjoyed

administrative powers and privileges. Villages other than those granted were ruled by Grāmika or Grāmapati standing for an agency of the government. The revenue collected from the villages went to the State-treasury in the form of taxes both in cash and in kind. The kinds of taxes known from the records were bhāga - bhoga - kara (tax in grains and periodical offerings), hiraṇya (tax in cash) and sarvaplāḍā (all forms of forced labour) from which the donated villages were exempted. The responsibility of the Grāmika was to assist the Revenue administration in the collection of taxes. The village-headman used to carry on the administration in a village with the assistance of Elders (Mahattaras) and householders (Kuṭumbins) who formed the Village-council (Aṣṭakulādhikaraṇa), later known as Grāmasabhā. Defence and revenue-collection were the two main functions for which the headman was usually entitled to enjoy a piece of land. In the Dāmodarpur C.P.⁴⁹ of the time of Budhagupta, Patradāsa is mentioned as the Record-keeper (Pustapāla) in the village Palāśavṛndaka. This Record-keeper appears to have been the direct state-representative in a village.

49. Ibid. P. 325.
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As regards agricultural production, forest-products and even arts and crafts, some villages developed specialisation on account of the ecology and resources available. Obviously, an interdependence of the villages cannot be ruled out. Further, the towns and cities could not grow up without the regular supply of the surplus production of commodities from the villages. It would be, therefore, unreasonable to hold that the village-society enjoyed self-sufficiency and remained cut off from the world outside.

The theory of Asiatic mode of production, however, lays emphasis upon the self-sufficient economy of the village and low level of exchange system. But what we can glean from the records at our disposal seem to suggest that exchange of commodities between the villages through common markets was quite known in those days. Epigraphic references to Haṭṭa, Haṭṭikā⁵⁰ (market places) and Naudan-
ḍaka, Nauyoga⁵¹ (ports), no doubt, indicate trade and commercial activities implying a system of exchange through a medium, or, sometimes, by barter.

50. CBI., PP. 48, 100.

51. Ibid., PP. 80, 67.

Urban society :

From indigenous literary sources, foreign accounts and epigraphic records, we come to know that since early times, towns and cities had grown up in different parts of Bengal as administrative head-quarters, centres of trade and commerce, centres of education and culture and places of pilgrimage.

Both literary and epigraphic records of Bengal refer to different types of towns and cities, viz. pattana (a port or a town situated either on the bank or confluence of rivers), Nigama (a market-town), Vihāra (monastery or University-town), Jayaskandhāvāra (Military camp or head-quarters), Adhikaraṇa (administrative head-quarters) belonging to Vīthī, Viṣaya, Maṇḍala and Bhukti (administrative units from the sub-divisional to the provincial level). Towns and cities like Puṇḍranagara, Puṣkaraṇa, Koṭivarṣa, Pañcanagarī, Vardhamāna, Navyāvakaśikā, Karṇasuvarṇa, Tāmrālipti, Rohitagiri, Rāmāvatī, Priyaṅgu, Paṭṭikera, Vijayapura, Simhapura and Suvarṇagrāma figure as prominent centres of political importance. As it is known from the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea, in the early centuries of the Christian era, Gāṅge was the most flourishing port

at the confluence of the Bhāgīrathī and the sea.⁵²

The earliest city known from epigraphic records is Puṇḍranagara which, according to the Mahāsthān Fragmentary Stone Inscr.,⁵³ was the administrative head-quarters under the Maurya rule in Northern Bengal. The city is located at Mahasthangarh, the findspot of the inscription. In the Karatoyāmāhātmya,⁵⁴ Mahāsthāna has been referred to as sacred Puṇḍrakṣetra or Puṇḍranagara. From the Gupta period onwards, Puṇḍranagara was the administrative head-quarters in the province Puṇḍravardhanābhukti. In the account of Hiuen Tsang and the Rāmacarita, mention has been made of this flourishing town having much commercial importance. The Rāmacarita⁵⁵ refers to rows of selling-centres in the city.

The Susuniā Inscr.⁵⁶ of Candravarman mentions Puṣkarāṇa as the administrative head-quarters of King Candravarman. It is located at Pokhrana, twenty-five miles

52. Periplus of the Erythrean Sea, Ed. Wilfred H. Schoff, New Delhi, 1974, P. 63.

53. CBI., P. 39; EI. XXI, P. 85ff.

54. BI., P. 359.

55. Ibid., PP. 359-60.

56. CBI., PP. 40-41.

north east of Susuniā, on the south bank of the river Dāmodara.⁵⁷ The Dāmodarpur copper-plates of the Gupta period refer to an important administrative unit named Koṭivarṣaviṣaya in Paunḍravardhanabhukti, of which Koṭivarṣa was the administrative centre. According to Hemacandra's Abhidhānacintāmaṇi and Puruṣottama's Trikāṇḍaśeṣa, Devīkoṭa, Bānpur, Umāvana, Śonitapur etc. were various names of Koṭivarṣa.⁵⁸ The town Koṭivarṣa which is said to have been situated on the bank of the river Punarbhavā is identified with Bāngarh in the Dinajpur district. The vast ruins spreading over Bāngarh and adjoining villages yield relics of a prosperous urban settlement. The Rāmacarita gives a picturesque description of numerous temples at Koṭivarṣa which were attended upon by a number of worshippers. Varāṇasī which was the birth place of Brāhmaṇa families, which flourished on account of its town of Skandanagara, and as such was held in high esteem and which contained in it the city of Śonitapura crowded by the images of gods, installed in temples, which looked quite gay with lotuses of very large sizes. ┌ Brahmakulodbhavaṁ Skandana-gareṇa
mūrcchitāmitā-pacitīm | Tairatigurūtpalāvāsairasvapnair-
bharita - Śonitapuraṇca || 7.⁵⁹

57. HAB., P. 39.

58. Amitabha Bhattacharya, Historical Geography of Ancient and Early Mediaeval Bengal, Calcutta, 1977, P. 73.

59. RC. III. 9.

Pañcanagarī was, according to the Baigrām C.P.⁶⁰ of the Gupta year 128 (=448 A.D.), an administrative headquarters of the district of Pañcanagarī in Paundravardhana-bhukti. The town flourished during the Gupta rule in Bengal and maintained its importance upto the Pāla period.⁶¹ It is identified by some with modern Pāncbibi in the Bogra district.⁶²

The Pāhārpur C.P. Inscr.⁶³ of G.E. 159 (=479 A.D.) refers to a Vihāra (monastery) at Vaṭagohālī founded by the Jaina preceptor Guhanandin. Vaṭagohālī might have gained some importance as a centre of education and culture. Vaṭagohālī has been identified with Goālbhiṭā at Pāhārpur. The monastery later developed into the great Buddhist Vihāra of Dharmapāla at Somapura,⁶⁴ as it is indicated by the terracotta sealings with an inscription Śrī-Somapure Śrī-Dharmapaladeva-mahāvihāre.⁶⁵ Krīpura mentioned in the Guṇaighar C.P.⁶⁶ of Mahārājādhirāja Vainyagupta was the Jayaskandhāvāra of the said king. The same record also refers to a Vihāra (monastery) of

60. CBI., P. 50.

61. cf. Belwā C.P. of Mahīpāla I; EI. XXIX, P. 6ff.

62. Ibid., PP. 5-6.

63. EI. XX, P. 61ff.

64. Ibid., P. 59.

65. ARASI. 1927 - 28, PP. 105-6.

66. CBI., P. 65.

Avalokiteśvara founded by Mahāyāna preceptor Śāntideva. It might have developed into a University town. The location of the monastery, near the port and waterways making its boundaries, leads us to suggest that it was not only a centre of Buddhist learning and culture but also that of trade and commerce.

Three Faridpur C.P. grants mention Navyāvakāśikā as provincial administrative head-quarters which in the 6th century A.D. was under the rule of Dharmāditya, Gopacandra and Samācāradeva. The derivative meaning of the term shows that "the town was founded on a recent occasion".⁶⁷ It has been suggested by some scholars that Navyāvakāśikā could correspond to Sabhar in Dacca district.⁶⁸ Navyāvakāśikā seems to have been a meeting place of traders, as it is indicated by the reference to Vyāpārakārāṇḍya (customs-officer) in the Faridpur C.P.⁶⁹ of Gopacandra. We also find reference to customs-officer and chief-traders (pradhāna-vyāpārīṇaḥ) at the district of Vārakamaṇḍala which lay within Navyāvakāśikā. Vārakamaṇḍala, referred to in four

67. SHAIB., P. 139.

68. Ibid.

69. CBI., PP. 83 - 84.

copper-plates⁷⁰ discovered at Faridpur, was a district town and a centre of trade and commerce as pointed out above. References to port (naudanda) or ship-building harbour (nāvātākṣeṇī)⁷¹ indicate that trade by water-routes went on briskly in the sixth century. In the Ghugrahāṭī Grant⁷² of Samācaradeva is mentioned Suvarṇa-vīthī, the administrative head-quarters of the provincial governor Antaraṅga Uparika Jīvadatta. The town has not yet been identified satisfactorily. Candravarmakoṭa mentioned in the same record might have been a fortified town for military purpose.

Karṇasuvarṇa finds mention in the Vappaghoṣavāṭa Grant⁷³ of Jayanāga and Nidhānpur grant (Plate no. I)⁷⁴ of Bhāskaravarman as an administrative head-quarters. The city earned fame as the capital of the Gauda king Śaśaṅka. Hiuen Tsang (7th century A.D.) visited Karṇasuvarṇa which he mentioned as Kia - lo - na - su - fa - la - na and visited the Lo - to - mi - chi monastery at the place.

70. Ibid., pp. 80, 83.

71. Ibid., pp. 80, 76.

72. EI. XVII, p. 74ff.

73. EI. XVIII, p. 60ff.

74. CPS., p. 11.

This Lo - to - mi - chi is identified with the Mahāvihāra at Raktamṛttikā that has been traced in a legend occurring on a seal found by an excavation at Rājabāḍiḍāngā near Murshidabad on the Bhāgīrathī.⁷⁵

The Vappaghoṣavāṭa Grant of Jayanāga refer to an administrative unit called Audamvarika-viṣaya which might have its head-quarters at Audumvara. The district of Audumbara seems to be identical with Sarkar Audumbar mentioned in the Āin - i - Ākbarī. Scholars on the basis of different sources have suggested that the Sarkar of Audumbara stretched over portion of Murshidabad and Birbhum.⁷⁶

Vardhamāna was probably the principal town in Vardhamāna bhukti as suggested by the Mallasārul C.P. of Viṣayasena (6th century A.D.), Irdā C.P. of Kāmboja Nayapāla (10th century), Naihāṭi C.P. of Vallālasena and Govindapur C.P. of Lakṣmaṇasena (12th century). The antiquity of the town reaches back to the time of Jaina Kalpasūtra.⁷⁷ It also finds mention in Somadeva's Kathāsaritsāgara⁷⁸ and

75. Amitabha Bhattacharya, op. cit., P. 52; HAB., P. 7.

76. EI. XIX, P. 286ff.

77. B.I., P. 356.

78. Ibid.

Varāhamihira's Br̥hatsaṃhitā.⁷⁹ In the Irdā C.P. of Nayapāla, Daṇḍabhukti-maṇḍala (extreme south of Midnapore district) is said to have been included in Vardhamāna-bhukti, while in the Naiḥāṭi C.P.⁸⁰ of Vallālasena parts of Uttara - Rāḍha - maṇḍala is said to have been within Vardhamānabhukti, suggesting that Vardhamāna embraced considerable parts of Western and Southern Bengal (ancient Rāḍha-janapada).

Suvvūṅga mentioned in the Tipperā C.P.⁸¹ of Lokanātha was probably a district-town. N.K. Bhattasali locates the district-town in the Cachar area, east of Sylhet. The city of Devaparvata finds mention in the Kailān C.P.⁸² of Śrīdhāraṇarāta (6th century A.D.), Tipperā C.P. of Bhavadeva (8th century A.D.) and the Paśchimbhāg C.P.⁸³ of Śrīchandra (10th century A.D.). It seems to be the capital of both the Rātas and Devas. The city is said to have been situated on the holy river Kṣīrodā in Samatāṭa. The topographical information points to the location of Devaparvata at the Maināmatī hills near Comilla. The

78. Ibid.

80. IB., P. 68.

81. EI. XV, P. 306.

82. SI. Vol. II, P. 37.

83. EDEP., P. 75.

Nidhānpur C.P.⁸⁴ of Bhāskaravarman (7th century A.D.) records grant of land to the Brahmins in the district of Candrapurī which might have its administrative centre at the town of Candrapurā. Candrapuraviṣaya also finds mention in the Paśchimbhāg C.P. of Śrīcandra, where it is said to have been incorporated in Śrīhaṭṭamaṇḍala in Paṇḍravardhanabhukti.

Jayakarmāntavāsaka was the capital of the Khadgas, as it is evident from the Āshrafpur C.P.⁸⁵ of Devakhadga. According to N.K. Bhattasali,⁸⁶ Karmānta was the capital of Samatāṭa which, in his opinion, covered the Tippera and Noakhali Districts, together with the eastern half of the Mymensingh and Dacca Districts and the greater part of the Sylhet District and the city stood at the site of modern Baḍkaṁta. Karmāntavāsaka has been identified with Baḍkaṁta in the Tippera District.⁸⁷ The Chittagong C.P. of Kāntideva (9th century A.D.) mentions Vardhamānapura as the capital of King Kāntideva. The location of the town in the area ruled by the king remains uncertain.⁸⁸

84. EI. XIX, P. 118.

85. MASB. I, P. 85.

86. EI. XVII, P. 351.

87. Ibid. XVII, P. 351.

88. Ibid. XXVI, P. 317ff.

Tāmralipti finds mention in the Dudhpāni Rock Inscr.⁸⁹ of Udayamāna (8th century A.D.) where it is learnt that merchants from distant places like Ayodhyā used to frequent the port of Tāmralipti for purposes of trade. It has been identified with Tamlites of Ptolemy (2nd century A.D.), modern Tamluk in the Midnapore district. Ptolemy locates this sea-port on the bank of the Ganges. The sea-port finds mention in the account of the Chinese travellers Fa-hien (5th century A.D.), Hiuen-Tsang and It-sing (7th century A.D.).

In the Irdā C.P.⁹⁰ of Kāmboja Nayapāla (11th century A.D.), Priyaṅgu is described as the capital (Rājadhānyāḥ Priyaṅgutaḥ) of the Pāla-Kāmboja rulers. The city can not be identified with any amount of certainty. The first five verses of the inscription give us a description of the city decorated with high-towering temples with banners at their tops and golden rampart-walls and crystal gateways
[Dūravomodgama - klāntairiva yatra surālayaiḥ | Calatpatākā-
jihvāgrairvilihyante payomucaḥ v.1. Haimānagniruco yaśyāṁ
prākārānadhīśerate Sphāṭikāni sphuṭābhāni gopurāṇivi-
bhartiyyā v.4] The city was situated somewhere in the modern Hooghly or Midnapore district.⁹¹

89. Ibid. II, P. 345.

90. Ibid. XXII, P. 150ff.

91. BI., P. 356.

The royal camp situated at Vikramapura is mentioned in the land-grant charters of the Candras, the Varmans and the Senas. The ruins of Rāmapāla, now a village in the Vikrampur parganah of the Dacca District in Bangladesh, perhaps represents Vikramapura, the capital of the rulers of Vaṅga (Eastern Bengal). That Vikramapura was the stronghold of the Candras is evident from the findspot of the Rāmpāl C.P. of Śrīcandra and its mention in all the land-grants of the Candras. We find reference to the royal camp at the same place of the Varman records.⁹² Lastly, the city was brought under the occupation of the Senas who conquered at least parts of East Bengal by driving away the Varmans off their stronghold at Vikramapura.⁹³

The Mānāhali C.P. grant⁹⁴ of Madanapāla refers to the royal camp at Rāmāvatī which seems to have been one of the Pāla capitals during the reign of Rāmapāla and Madanapāla. The Rāmacarita gives a glowing description

92. Sāmantasār C.P. of Harivarman, EI. XXX, P. 255ff.; Vajrayogini C.P. of Sāmalavarman, Ibid., Belāva C.P. of Bhojavarman, CBI., P. 236.

93. Amitabha Bhattacharya, op. cit., P. 98.

94. CBI., PP. 211-17.

of the city which was founded by Rāmapāla. [cf. Akuruta - mahādraviṇa - veṣṭita-pratiṣṭhā - dhiropita - harīśaḥ | Kanakamaya - dhāma - lekḥā - dhikaraṇamapi - meru - śikharamiva 7.⁹⁵ The ruins of this capital ~~has~~ ^{have} been discovered in the Malda district. The city was situated at the junction of the Karatoyā and the Ganges.⁹⁶ Its advantageous geographical position added to its strategic and commercial importance.

Śrīcandrapura, the city named after the king Śrīcandra, finds mention in his Paśchimbhāg C.P. Inscr. The city is said to have been located in the midst of three districts namely, Garalā, Pogāra and Candrapura, together with the half (or parts) of Vedikā attached to Sātalavarga within Śrīhaṭṭa-maṇḍala. It was a place well-known for religious establishments, monasteries and temples dedicated to the Brāhmanical gods. Some of the maṭhas are referred to as Deśāntariya and Vaṅgāla. It was, therefore, a noted place of pilgrimage as well as a University town.

Śrīhaṭṭamaṇḍala mentioned in the Paśchimbhāg C.P. of Śrīcandra might have its head-quarters at Śrīhaṭṭa, modern

95. RC. III.32. 3.

96. SHAIB., P. 134, f.n. 3; JASB. (1900) XIX, pt. I, P. 71.

Sylhet. The existence of Śrīhaṭṭamaṇḍala comprising several districts may be derived from the discovery of the Bhāṭerā copper-plates⁹⁷ of Govinda Keśavadeva and Īśānadeva that record grant of land in the village Bhāṭapaḍā and its adjacent areas. Bhāṭapaḍā has been identified with the modern Bhāṭerā. The epithet Śrīhaṭṭanātha to the local deity Vaṭeśvara Śiva also proves the inclusion of the donated land in the administrative unit of Śrīhaṭṭa. Further, large Brāhmanical religious establishments in the districts of Śrīhaṭṭamaṇḍala should have attached a great deal of educational and religious importance to the town of Śrīhaṭṭa. Bhūriśreṣṭhika is referred to in Śrīdhara's (10th century A.D.) Nyāyakandalī, not only, as a centre of Brāhmanic learning, but also, as a seat of the Śreṣṭhins or merchants and bankers.⁹⁸ It also finds mention in Kṛṣṇamiśra's Prabodhacandrodaya (11th century A.D.) and Bhārata Chandra Raya's (18th century A.D.) Satya Pirer Katha. Bhūriśreṣṭhika has been identified with the present village of Bhursut on the right bank of the Dāmodar in the Hooghly district.⁹⁹

97. CPS., PP. 159, 186.

98. IA. 1930, P. 50.

99. SHAIB., PP. 74-75.

In the Belāva C.P. of Bhojavarman, Simhapura is said to be the homeland of the Varmans. Regarding the location of the town, the choice seems to lie between three known cities bearing the name : one to the north of the Salt Range in the Punjab, a second in Kalinga, perhaps identical with the modern Singhapuram between Chicacole and Narasannapeta, and the third in Rādha generally identified with Singur in the Hooghly district.¹⁰⁰ If the identification is based upon the evidence deduced from the Ceylonese chronicle Mahāvamsā, it may be located in Rādha-janapada.

Peranātana was probably the administrative headquarters of the district of Peranātana mentioned in the Maināmati C.P. of Govinda-candra. The town was situated in Samatāṭamaṇḍala, as it is indicated by the copper-plate grant. The Maināmati C.P. of Raṇavaṅkamalla of Harikāladeva mentions the city of Paṭṭikera that was famous for its Buddhist monastery. Paṭṭikera also seems to have been the administrative head-quarters of the territorial unit of this name in Samatāṭa-maṇḍala in the 11th century A.D., as it is evident from the Maināmati Plate (no.1) of

100. HAB. P. 207, also P. 214, f.n. 13, 14, 15.

Laḍahavandra. It appears from the location of the present pargana of Pāṭikara that the vast ruins of an urban settlement on the bank of the river Gomati and in the vicinity of the Maināmati hills bear testimony to the existence of ancient town of Paṭṭikera. A number of silver coins discovered along with the land-grant charter of Bhavadeva bear the legend 'Paṭikera' suggesting, no doubt, its commercial importance in the early period.

Gauḍa in Malda district seems to be place where once existed the city of Lakṣmaṇāvatī, probably founded by the Sena king Lakṣmaṇasena. This royal seat stood on the Ganges near its junction with the Mahānandā and figured prominently till the days of Humayun and Akbar.¹⁰¹ The city was known as Lakhnauti in the Tabaqāt-i-Nāsiri.¹⁰² Vijayapura is stated to have been the Sena capital in Dhoyi's Pavanadūtam (12th century A.D.) [Skandhāvāraṁ Vijayapuramityunnatām rājadhānīm].¹⁰³ The modern village of Bijayanagar (near Godāgiri), seven miles to the south of Deopārā and about ten miles to the west of Rāmpur-Boāliā, is considered by

101. Amitabha Bhattacharya, op. cit., P. 102.

102. Ibid., P. 45.

103. Dhoyi's Pavanadūtam, Ed. Chintaharan Chakravarti, Calcutta, 1926.

R.P.Chanda to be identical with Vijayapura.¹⁰⁴ R.P.Chanda refers to the local tradition connecting Vijayanagara with king Vijayasena, while M.Chakravarti identifies Vijayapuri with Nudiah,¹⁰⁵ the capital of Rae Lakhmaniah at the time of the Muhammadan conquest.¹⁰⁶ The description, as given in the Pavanadūtam, suggests that the city flourished near the Ganges. The temple of Pradyumneśvara, mentioned in the Deopādā Prasasti, might be situated in some parts of Vijayapura, identified with Vijayanagara, which is not far from Deopādā.

Literary and epigraphic evidence leave no scope of doubt that the towns in ancient Bengal were centres of administrative, military, commercial, industrial and cultural activities. The predominant class in the administrative head-quarters was constituted by civil and military officials. Ports and market-towns were chiefly populated by the people of the mercantile community including traders, merchants and artisans. However, in all cases, there were artisans producing consumers' goods and traders maintaining the import-export linkage to

104. R.P.Chanda, Gauḍa Rājamālā, Rajsahi, 1319 B.S., P. 75, JRAS., 1914, PP. 101, 105.

105. JASB., NS. I, P. 45.

106. Minhāj-ud-dīn's Tabaqāt-i-Nāsiri, Trans. by Raverty, Calcutta, 1880, PP. 554, 559, f.n. 2.

cater to the needs of the sophisticated urban society. The urban social life, as depicted in Vātsyāyana's Kāmasūtram, gives us to understand the luxurious way of life led by a nāgaraka. Sandhyākaranandin's Rāmacaritam and Dhoyi's Pavanadūtam throw side-lights upon the sophisticated nature of city-bred life. The priestly class, including Brāhmaṇas and Buddhist monks, presumably dominated the society in University-towns and places of pilgrimage.

Traders and Artisans :

It may be held that the key-position in the urban society belonged to the merchants, traders and artisans. The Dāmodarpur copper-plates of the Gupta period inform us that Nagaraśreṣṭhī (President of the guild of merchants or according to some a banker), Sārthavāha (Chief of the guild of caravan traders), Prathamakulika (Chief artisan) were included in the Council (Adhiṣṭhānādhikaraṇa) that was constituted to advise the Officer-in-charge of a district in the matter of administration. This is, no doubt, a positive evidence of the State-recognition to the mercantile community. The merchants and traders were so well-organised through guilds (Nigama referred to in the Bāsāh seals) that the State could not but recognise their position in the society. During the Post-Gupta

period, the State-recognition to the trading and artisan-community seems to have continued to be extended. The Faridpur C.P. of Gopacandra (6th century) refers to 'Pradhānavyāpārīṇah' (leading merchants) as witnesses to land-transactions. From the 8th century onwards, the references to traders and merchants in the epigraphic records are not found so often as before. But that does not necessarily indicate the decline of their position as suggested by Dr. Niharranjan Ray.¹⁰⁷ The Kurkihār Bronze Inscription¹⁰⁸ of the Pāla period refers to Vanīk Māneka. Sārthavāha Jambhala-mitra is stated in the Māndhuk Inscr.¹⁰⁹ of Gopāla II to have endowed an image of Buddha. In the Nārāyaṇapura Image Inscr.¹¹⁰ and the Baghaurā Image Inscr.¹¹¹ of the time of Mahīpāla-I, mention is made of Vanīks Buddhamitra and Lokadatta who installed the images of Nārāyaṇa and Vināyaka respectively. The Chandimau Image Inscr.¹¹² of Rāmapāla mentions Vanīk Sādhu Saharaṇa who

107. BI., PP. 327-28.

108. JBORS. XXVI, No. 21.

109. IHQ. XXVIII, P. 51.

110. IC. IX, P. 121; IA. XIV, P. 165.

111. EI. XVII, P. 353.

112. MASB. V, P. 93-94.

is said to have erected the image of Bodhisattva Padmapāṇi. In addition to these, the ongoing commercial activities may reasonably be inferred from epigraphic references to the growth of different types of industries, facilities of transport afforded by the river-system and the luxuries of urban life. Commercial and cultural relations between Bengal and South-East Asian countries that commenced in the early centuries of the Christian era seem to have continued in the Pāla period. The Nālandā C.P.¹¹³ of Devapāla records the grant of five villages by the Pāla king to King Bāluputradeva of the Śailendra dynasty, ruler of Jāvā, Sumātrā and the Malay Peninsula, for making an endowment in favour of a monastery at Nālandā built by the Śailendra king.

According to the tradition recorded in Ānandabhaṭṭa's Vallālacarita, the power and prestige of Suvarṇavanīks suffered decline on the ground of their refusal to agree

113. EI.XVII,P.318.

to Vallālasena's repeated demand for monetary loan. This might reflect the fact that the patronage of the State was withdrawn from the guild of gold-merchants, as they failed to honour arbitrary royal demand from them. However, the position of the merchants is not to be considered in isolation, because, trade and industry were organised through guilds by joint efforts. The merchants had to depend upon the craftsmen and artisans for manufactured goods to be exported in exchange of imported merchandise.

Artisans and Craftsmen :

Epigraphic references to ornaments made of gold, silver, pearl, diamond etc. suggest, no doubt, an indispensability of gold-smiths, jewellers and precious stone-cutters in the life of luxuries led in towns and cities.¹¹⁴ Gold-smith, however, finds mention in the Kurkihār Bronze Inscr. (no. 49) of Mahīpāla and the Bihar Image Inscr. of Vīgrahapāla III. The Paśchimbhāg C.P. of Śrīcandra refers to artisans Karmakāra (black-smith), Carmakāra (leather-worker), Sūtradhāra (carpenter), Sthapatī (Masons, Architects) and Mālākāra (Garland-makers). In the Bhāṭerā C.P.

114. cf. Deopāṭā Praśasti; CBI., PP. 245-49; RC. III. 33-34.

of Govinda Keśava, reference is made to Dantakāra (ivory-worker) and Kāmsyakāra (Braziers) dwelling in the village. They must have also resided in the towns where there was a constant demand for commodities produced by them. Epigraphic reference to Śaṅkhavādaka¹¹⁵ suggest indirectly the existence of a guild or corporation of conch-shell workers. Wood-crafts were handled in different dimensions by Sūtradhāra (carpenter), Takṣana (engraver) and shipbuilders. That the ship-building industry was in a flourishing condition is affirmed by indirect references to boats by the terms Naudaṇḍaka (the post to fasten boat) Nāvātākṣeṇī (ship-building harbour),¹¹⁶ Naukhāta¹¹⁷ (the channel open to boats), Nauyoga¹¹⁸ (port), Nāvika¹¹⁹ and explicit mention of various types of fleet meant for warfare [Nānāvidha-nauvātaka-sampādita, Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla 7. Reference to Nauvitāna (war-fleet) in the Deopādā Prasasti (v.22) of Vijayasena is no less significant.

115. EDEP., P. 67.

116. Faridpur copper-plates of Dharmāditya, CBI., PP. 80, 76.

117. Guṇaighar C.P. of Vainyagupta, Ibid., P. 67.

118. Ibid.

119. CPS., P. 161.

Śilpin :

Sculptors and engravers were collectively known as Śilpins during the Pāla period. Most of the records of this period mention the name of the artist who inscribed those records on metals or stones. In some of the records,¹²⁰ we find mention of the places wherefrom the engravers hailed. It indicates the localisation of particular arts and crafts. Varendrī was a famous centre of arts and crafts developing a particular style of its own. The Deopāḍā Prasasti of Vijayasena is said to have been engraved by Rāṇaka Śūlapāṇi, the crest-jewel of the guild of Varendrī. [Cakhāna Vārendraka-śilpigoṣṭhī-cūḍāmaṇi Rāṇakah Śūlapāṇiḥ]. Two prominent artists of the Pāla period were Dhīmān and Bitpāla, who are said to have belonged to Varendrī.¹²¹ It may be reasonably held that the guild of artists belonging to Varendrī was responsible for developing the East-Indian school of Art in early medieval Bengal.

120. cf. Belwā C.P. of Vigrahapāla III, EI. XXIX, P. 9ff.;
Jājilpārā C.P. of Gopāla II, JAS. XVII, P. 137ff.;
Āmgāchi C.P. of Vigrahapāla III, EI. XV, P. 295ff.

121. Tāranātha : History of Buddhism in India (tr.), IA. IV, P. 102; Aksayakumar Maitra, Introd. to Gaudarājamālā, P. IV.

Weaver :

The weavers appear to have occupied an important position in the society, because, the weaving industry flourished in Bengal since very early times. As it has been already stated above,¹²² the Arthaśāstra of Kauṭilya refers to varieties of cloths manufactured in Bengal.

The artisan class may be broadly divided into two groups : artists and craftsmen, and producers of consumers' goods, viz. Tailika (Oilmen), Modaka (Sweet-meat-makers), Tantuvāya (weavers).

Menial Class :

The menials presumably formed the lowest stratum of the urban society. They formed some occupational castes like, Rajaka (washerman) and Nāpitas (barber). The outcaste Caṇḍālas seem to have been charged with the duties at the cremation ground. The existence of the menial class cannot be considered as the characteristic of the urban society, because their relevance to the rural society cannot be questioned.

122. Vide Chapter III ; Mixed Castes.

Other professional groups :

Concentration of wealth and luxuries stemming from it in towns and cities reasonably gave rise to professions like those of acting, dancing and singing etc. The Paśchim-bhāg C.P. Inscr. refers to Naṭa (dancer), Ceṭikā (maid-servant probably Devadāsī), Dhakkāvādaka (drummer), Kāhalika (player on Kahala, a kind of drum), Drāgaḍika (player on kettle-drum) etc. City-damsels and the temple-girls (Devadāsī) are referred to in the epigraphic records¹²³.

Composition of the urban society :

From the above discussion, it appears that the urban society was composed of the ruling class, priestly class, mercantile class, artisan class, menial class and parasite professional class. The magnates of the society were the royal dignitaries, the wealthy Brahmins, merchants and industrial entrepreneurs. Sometimes, it so happened that absentee land-lords lived in towns and maintained remote

123. Edilpur C.P. of Keśavasena, v. 23, IB., P. 124; Deopādā Praśasti of Vijayasena, v. 31, Ibid., P. 49; Bhuvaneśvar Praśasti of Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva, v. 30, Ibid., P. 35.

control on their landed property in villages. It would not be unreasonable to hold that the land-owning class, known by the generic term Mahattara, often shifted from villages to towns in search of richer and more luxurious way of life and thus was responsible, to a great extent, for draining out the surplus production of villages for consumption in towns and cities. The Deopāḍā Praśasti of Vijayasena draws our attention to the simplicity of the village-dwelling Brāhmaṇas in contradistinction to the luxury of the townfolk. It is said : "Through the favour showered by him, wives of Brāhmaṇas, as they amassed great fortune, were instructed by city-damsels to recognise pearls from their similarity with seeds of cotton, pieces of emerald from their resemblance with leaves of Śāka, pieces of silver from their similitude to bottle-gourd flowers, jewels from their likeness with developed seeds of pomegranates and gold from its closeness to blooming flowers of the creepers of pumpkin-gourd". └Muktāḥ kārppāsavī-jairmmarakataśakalaṁ śākapatrairalābupuṣpai rūpyāṇi ratnaṁ
pariṇatibhidurairkuṣṭhibhirddāḍimānām|kuṣmāṇḍī-vallarīṇaṁ
vikasitakusumaiḥ kāñcanaṁ nāgarībhiḥ śikṣyante yatprasādā-
vahuvibhavajuṣāṁ yoṣitaḥ śrotriyāṇām||v. 23┘.

Interdependence of Village and Town :

A village or a cluster of villages was often transformed into a town or a city for administrative, strategic, commercial and cultural reasons; already pointed out above. Again, when a town or a city faced decline, its position would be reduced to that of a village. However, a town or a city used to be surrounded by a large number of villages. The town was entirely dependent on the villages for its subsistence. The surplus production from the villages seems to have been supplied to the towns in the form of food-grains and raw-materials for manufacturing industries. Commodities were transported from villages to towns by land-routes and waterways, following the usual rules of marketing. In the Guṇaighar C.P. of Vainyagupta, we find mention of the ports at Cūḍāmaṇi, Nagaraśrī and Pradhāmāra in connection with the boundaries of the gifted land [Purveṇa Cūḍāmaṇi - Nagaraśrī - nauyogayormadhye jolā 1. 28].¹²⁴ References to Vyāpāra-kāraṇḍya and Vyāpāraṇḍa (customs-officer) in post-Gupta epigraphs¹²⁵ and to Śaulkika (collector of tolls and custom dues) and Tarika

124. CBI., P. 67.

125. Ibid., PP. 80, 83.

(officer collecting ferry dues) in the Pāla epigraphs¹²⁶ seem to suggest the anxiety of the State to determine or control import-export process by collection of tolls and custom-duties. The Chittagong C.P.¹²⁷ of Dāmodaradeva refers to Rājapatha (royal-road or highway) that should have facilitated trade and commerce.

In addition to food-grains, salt was one of the items that might have been supplied from villages to the towns. Saltpit has been often referred to in the land-grant charters allowing to the donees the right to the salt-pit [/salavanah, lavanākara/].¹²⁸ Forest-products like wood, bamboo, cotton and mineral-products seem to have been supplied from the villages in order to make provisions for raw materials required by industrial establishments in towns. In the land donation records, mention is made of the natural resources like forest [/sajhāṭavitapah/],¹²⁹ orchards [/sāmrapanasa, saguvākanārikela .../]¹³⁰ to the

126. Ibid., P. 168.

127. IB., P. 158ff.

128. cf. Rāmpāl C.P. of Śrīcandra, IB., P. 1ff.; Irdā C.P. of Nayapāla^{EXXII}, P. 150ff.

129. Tarpanighi Grant of Lakṣmaṇasena, CBI., P. 293.

130. Belāva C.P. of Bhojavarman, Ibid., P. 239;
Mādhāinagar Grant of Lakṣmaṇasena, Ibid., P. 291.

enjoyment of which the donees were entitled. In other words, the donees might consume, distribute or exchange those products from forests and gardens for other commodities. Again, in case of rent-free holdings, the villagers were similarly entitled to enjoy those products and exchange the surplus in nearby markets for other goods.

The villages were hardly in need of commodities manufactured in towns, especially the luxury-goods. The daily necessities of the villagers seem to have been provided by the rural artisans and craftsmen. The rural society, no doubt, hinged upon the economy based upon agriculture and small industries.

It appears from the verse 23 of the Deopādā Praśasti of Vijayasena, as quoted before, that the Brahmins dwelling in villages sometimes used to settle in the towns, accepting royal favour and their wives, who were accustomed to the simplicity of the village-life, were not familiar with the pomp and luxury of the urban life. The epigraphic evidence suggests also that the contact between towns and villages was regularly maintained. Although the villages were not at all dependent upon towns economically, the University towns and places of pilgrimage might have often

been visited by villagers, belonging to the upper class of the society, seeking higher education or religious merit (Punya). Some Brahmins and Kāyasthas seem to have been recruited from villages to join the judicial or administrative service in towns.

Taking into consideration the relevant data that can be derived, directly or indirectly, from the corpus of Bengal inscriptions, it appears that the social structure in ancient Bengal was an integration of the rural and urban society. The caste-ridden society in the village comprising Brahmins and non-Brahmin Śūdras was economically stratified into two main classes, namely, the land-owning class and the peasantry. On the other hand, the urban society, having less emphasis on the caste-system, comprised occupational classes that might have been divided into two strata, namely, the privileged and the non-privileged. The position of the non-privileged in towns corresponded to that of the peasantry in villages, while the status of the land-owning class in villages was almost equivalent to that of the privileged in towns and cities. It can hardly be denied that those in possession of the religious and ruling authorities enjoyed the most privileged position in the society, while those who were in charge of producing the

wealth and resources of the country, namely, the peasantry, artisans and traders, not to speak of the menial class, formed the less privileged or non-privileged stratum in the society. However, the urban society may be distinguished from the rural society, when we find the former dependent upon the latter economically and the latter upon the former politically and, to some extent, culturally. It can hardly be held that villages were alienated from towns and vice versa, as suggested by the propounders of the theory of "Asiatic society".

CHAPTER VI

State and Society

So long as ancient Bengal remained within the Magadhan empire during the Nanda-Maurya or Gupta age, it could hardly have claimed itself to be a separate state. With the rise of Vaṅga and Gauḍa as independent kingdoms, following the downfall of the Gupta Empire, the state-system might have gradually grown up in ancient Bengal. While the second half of the sixth century A.D. witnessed the political phenomena of the rise and fall of Vaṅga, in the first half of the seventh century A.D. an imperial unity was achieved centring round Gauḍa during the reign of Śaśāṅka. A century following the reign of Śaśāṅka is generally supposed to be the period of mātsyanyāya in both Gauḍa and Vaṅga.

Mātsyanyāya :

In the Khalimpur C.P.¹ of Dharmapāla, it is stated, thus : Mātsyanyāyamapohitum Prakṛtibhirlakṣmyāḥ karaṇ WV grāhitaḥ Śrī Gopāla iti ..., that is, "the illustrious Gopāla, whom the people made to take the hand of Fortune,

1. CBI., P. 96.

to put an end to the practice of fish". Gopāla, founder of the Pāla dynasty, who came to power sometime about the middle of the 8th century A.D. was elected king by the people in order to put an end to the state of anarchy which had prevailed in Bengal. Scholars interpreting the above passage have generally stressed upon the chaos and anarchy in the political life of Bengal that was caused by successive changes of ruling dynasties in both Gauḍa and Vaṅga and a series of invasions from outside.² But the social implication of the expression has been hardly explained by scholars. The following passage occurring in the Bhāgalpur C.P.³ of Nārāyaṇapāla eulogising the achievements of Gopāla states : Jitvā yaḥ kāmākāriprabhavamabhibhavam śāśvatīm prāpa śāntim, that is, "who (Gopāla) achieved peace for the people in Bengal by having defeated the attacks of the oppressors or tyrants". The expression kāmākāri stands for those unruly elements in the society who act wilfully and create law and order problem. This explanation would indirectly provide us with a clue to the actual condition prevailing in the society on the eve of Gopāla's accession. Those who are referred to as kāmākāri seem to

2. HAB., PP. 89 - 90.

3. CBI., P. 164.

have endangered the security of the family and private property-rights. The authors of ancient political treatises have referred to a state of law-lessness by the expression mātsyanyāya. In the Śāntiparvan of the Mahābhārata, (XII. 67. 2-16), it has been stated by Bhīṣma that a kingless country is overwhelmed by tyrants and those who live cannot enjoy the rights of family and property.⁴ Manu states that in the absence of king's daṇḍa, the strong would roast the weaker like 'fish on spit', ownership would remain with none and the lower ones would usurp the place of the higher ones.⁵ Thus, the Arthaśāstra-Smṛti school, represented by Kauṭilya, Manu and Bhīṣma, has indicated the insecurity of family-and private property-rights and other forms of social disorder associated with it as the main symptoms of mātsyanyāya. The social insecurity made it imperative for the people to enter into a mutual agreement to elect their king who might restore law and order in the society by his coercive power (daṇḍa) and incidentally establish a state with seven elements or organs.

4. U.N. Ghosal, A History of Indian political Ideas, Bombay, 1959, P. 197.

5. Ibid., PP. 168, 258, 244-45.

Social-Contract :

The social contract that led to the origin of the state is explained in the Śāntiparvan of the Mahābhārata where it is stated that the people, being tired of lawlessness in the society, made a compact that persons ~~made~~ guilty of antisocial acts like theft, murder, adultery or any kind of tyranny would be expelled from society. In order to inspire mutual confidence, they entered into a universal social contract to guarantee the agreement. And in order to strengthen the contract, they sought to appoint a king whom they would give a share of their property and who in return would protect the property of the subjects and be the object of their respect. The Buddhist text Digha Nikāya⁶ gives a more vivid exposition of the social-contract by stages. It is said that with the degeneration of heavenly life in an ideal state into earthly life, people gradually entered into a series of agreements among themselves and set up institutions of property and family. But this gave rise to the fear of theft and other forms of unsocial conduct. So the people entered into further agreement to

6. Digha Nikāya, Vol. III, Trans. by T.W. Rhys Davids, London, 1921, PP. 84-95.

select a chief who would promise the security of their family and property by chastising the wicked. In return, they would contribute to him a portion of their paddy. In the same way the Buddhist text Mahāvastu gives us to understand that the people, of their own, took an initiative to select their ruler or king so that anarchy and disorder in society might be combated effectively. Thus, with the origin of kingship originated the state with its different organs (aṅgas) for the upkeep of the social welfare. So, the state was constituted by the society and for the society.

Prakṛti :

The relations between the state and the society are quite evident from the passage of the Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla referring to the election of Gopāla as a king by the Prakṛtis (common people) in order to put an end to the state of anarchy. The interpretation of the term Prakṛti has led to a controversy among the scholars. While some suggest that general election was held by the people at large, others think that it was initiated by a group of officials or chiefs. It is, however, reasonable to hold that in a state of disorder regular election by the general mass of people was not practicable and that the selection

initially made by the leading chiefs was subsequently acclaimed by the people or prakṛtis.⁷ According to Pramode Lal Paul,⁸ prakṛti should be taken as a technical term to denote "principal officers of the state" and that Gopāla was placed on the throne by them. In support of his view, the scholar has cited evidence from the Śukranītisāra furnishing the list of ten Prakṛtis or officials like the chaplain, the minister, the judge and so on Samastaṁ purodhā lakṣaṇaṁ yaṁ taducyate purodāśca pratinidhiḥ Pradhānaḥ sacivastathā mantriḥ prādvivākaśca paṇḍitaḥ śumantrakāḥ amātya dūta ityetā rājñā prakṛtayadaśaḥ.⁹

Another reference to Prakṛtis as royal officials is to be found in the Rājatarāṅginī which records the election of Jalauka as king of Kashmir by a group of seven officials called Prakṛtis. But, in the absence of a stable government, we can hardly think of a group of permanent state officials wielding considerable political power. Mr. Paul seems to have raised doubt whether the people in Bengal in the middle of the 8th century A.D. were politically so conscious as to participate in the election of their king and,

7. HAB., PP. 95-96.

8. Pramode Lal Paul, The Early History of Bengal, Calcutta, 1939, P. 112.

9. SNS., BK. II, 196.

therefore, it has been held that it was the monopoly of the officials only to make their choice in the process of selecting a king. But in view of the social disorder (mātsyanyāya), it would not be unreasonable to assume that the people (prakṛti) played an active role, in the unavoidable circumstances, in the election of their king to put an end to the prevailing chaos and anarchy. The Tibetan-historian Lāmā Tāranātha(1573 A.D.) in his famous work 'History of Buddhism in India' (1608 A.D.) corroborates the information of the Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla, stating that the death of Lalitacandra was followed by a period of anarchy and confusion, when every Kṣatriya, Brāhmaṇa and merchant was a king in his own house.¹⁰ Tāranātha's account referring to the murder of a number of succeeding rulers and consequent miseries of the people, no doubt, brings into relief the abnormal political and social condition.¹¹ The Buddhist text Āryamañjuśrīmūlakalpa also records that following the death of Śaśāṅka, Gauḍatantra, that is, the political and social system in Gauḍa was reduced to mutual distrust and jealousy.

10. HAB., PP. 166-67.

11. Ibid., P. 167.

It was not, therefore, unlikely that the Prakṛtis or the common people took an initiative to elect their king in view of the urgency of the situation. Of course, the final election might have been preceded by a preliminary selection made by a group of leaders. It has been pointed out how the people took part in the election of their king as early as the fourth century B.C. and even earlier, as suggested by the Digha nikāya, the Arthaśāstra and the Śāntiparvan of the Mahābhārata. The experiences in the real political life seem to have been found in a theoretic framework in those early texts.

Mutual obligation of the state and the society :

The social contract theory propounded in the Buddhist and Brāhmanical texts emphasises upon mutual obligations of the state and the society. From the Marxist point of view, the state originated as a machine to safeguard the interests of the rich against those of the poor. Prof. R.S. Sharma suggests that the speculation of social contract theory as envisaged in early texts is the product of an advanced stage of social development when the tribal society had broken up, giving rise to the clash of interests

between people of unequal wealth.¹² According to him, the king's office was meant to support the haves against the combined attacks of the havenots, because in the Śānti-parvan (68.19) of the Mahābhārata it is stated that without the king's protection, the wealthy would have to encounter death, confinement and persecution¹³ and the Ayodhyākāṇḍa (67.18) of the Rāmāyaṇa states that in a kingless state the wealthy feel insecure.¹⁴

We may examine the view of Prof. Sharma in the context of eighth-century Bengal. The Prakṛtis or common people seem to have been effectively involved in the process of electing their king with the purpose of consolidating the body-politic. It is difficult to determine whether the Prakṛtis, referred to in the Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla, belonged to the privileged or non-privileged class of the society. It can hardly be held that mātsyanyāya, continuing for about a century in Bengal, caused distress to a particular section of the society. The Prakṛtis, referred to in the Pāla record, seem to represent the people in

12. R.S. Sharma, Political Ideas and Institutions in ancient India, Delhi, 1959, PP. 33 - 36.

13. Ibid., P. 40.

14. Ibid.

general, including all sections of the society. The Arthaśāstra-Smṛti school as well as the Buddhist school of thought give us to understand that the king was obliged to maintain law and order for the society as a whole, for which he was entitled to enjoy the share of the produce from the land and other sources. It appears that the position of the king was more dependent on the producing mass of people than on non-producing privileged few. Therefore, he was under no obligation to serve the interests of the privileged few as against the majority of the people. It has been enjoined in Rājadharmā that the king should use his daṇḍa or coercive power to protect the good and punish the wicked. Mutual obligations as envisaged in the "social contract" originally did not snap the direct ties between the state and the peasantry, although later, the rise of the land-owning class snapped them. From the Pāla records, however, we learn that Gopāla, being elected by the people even in the middle of the eighth century A.D., served the interests of the people by bringing under control those who had been disturbing the social order by their tyrant-like wilful acts.

Concept of State :

Ancient Indian thinkers regarded the state as an organic whole formed of seven constituents, also known as so many limbs (aṅgas). In Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra the state is defined as consisting of seven elements, viz. svāmī, amātya, janapada, durga, kośa, daṇḍa, and mitra [Svāmyamātyajanapadadurgakośadaṇḍamitrāṇi Prakṛtayah].¹⁵ Some manuscripts of the Śāntiparvan use the term aṣṭāṅgika rājya (eight-element state) in the critical edition (122.8), although the eighth element is not specifically mentioned. Kauṭilya does not include Purohita or royal priest as one of the constituents of the state, whereas Kāmandaka in his Nītisāra refers to Purohita in such a way that he might be recognised as one of the eight organs of the state. Of the seven constituents, svāmin (lord) and amātyas (minister) constituted the central government exercising the sovereign power. Svāmi perhaps refers to the head or lord of both monarchical and republican states, for in discussing the calamities affecting the rājā, Kauṭilya mentions the weakness of vairājya, i.e. non-monarchical states.¹⁶ The intention of using the term svāmī, instead of rājā, is to stress

15. AŚ. Vol. II, BK. VI. 1, P. 38.

16. Ibid., BK. VIII. 2, P. 86.

the sense of possession exercised by the head who occupies a very exalted position in the scheme of Kauṭilya. According to him, the svāmī should be endowed with qualities flowing from noble birth, wisdom, enthusiasm and personal ability

∟ Abhigāmika-guṇaḥ prajñā-guṇaḥ utsāhaguṇaḥ and ātmasampat 7.¹⁷

The second element amātya, usually translated as 'ministers', are distinguished from mantrins who are charged with the duty of advising the king and maintaining the confidential nature of the counsel (mantra). While discussing the number of amātyas constituting the mantripariṣad, Kauṭilya distinguishes between mantrins and amātyas. He restricts the number of mantrins to three or four ∟ Mantri-bhistribhiścaturbhirvāsaha mantrayeta 7,¹⁸ while the number of amātyas is increased in accordance with the capacity of giving them employment ∟ Yathāsāmarthyam iti Kauṭilya 7.¹⁹ Further, while discussing the requisite qualifications of amātyas, Kauṭilya states that any person can be appointed amātya in deference to the needs of place, time and work. But this is not so with the appointment of mantrins or

17. Ibid., BK. VI. 1, P. 38.

18. Ibid, Vol. I, BK. I. 15, P. 16.

19. Ibid, P. 17.

'counsellors' ∠ Vibhājyāmātyavibhavaṃ deśakālau ca karma ca |
Amātyāssarva evaite kāryāssyurnatu mantriṇaḥ || 7.²⁰ The
term amātya seems to refer to the Executive officers or
karmasacivas who are distinguished from the counsellors or
maṇṭhisaciva in the Junāgaḍ Inscr. of Rudradāman I (150 A.D.).
In the Chapter Mantripurohitotpattiḥ, Kauṭilya enumerates
all the requisite qualifications of ministers or amātyas
and three grades of the same in precedence with the degree
of qualifications. Perhaps those who fulfil all the requisite
qualifies of an amātya might be ranked in the post of
dhīsaciva or mantri or counsellor. Amātya of Kauṭilya is
identical with the Pāli amacca, who were employed as officers
of a general nature, such as village-headman, supervisors
of sale, transactions, judges, guides in worldly and spiritual
matters, surveyors etc.²¹ In the Arthaśāstra, therefore,
the amātyas constitute a regular cadre of service from which
all high functionaries such as ministers, collectors,
treasurers, officers engaged in civil and criminal adminis-
tration, envoys etc. are to be recruited. ∠ Amātyasampado-
petāssarvādhyakṣāśśaktitaḥ karmasu niyojyāḥ 7.²² Kāmandaka

20. Ibid. BK. I. 8, P. 9.

21. Richard Fick, Social Organisation of North-Eastern
India in Buddha's time, Calcutta, 1920, PP. 144 -49.

22. AŚ. Vol. I, BK. II. 9, P. 37.

also takes the term amātyas in a generic sense, but he seems to equate them with sacivas, for, in laying down the qualifications, the two terms are used without any discrimination.²³ But they seem to have been distinguished from the mantrins.²⁴ Kauṭilya assigns the amātyas agricultural operations, fortifications, welfare of the territory, prevention of adversities, punishment of the criminals etc. Janapadasya karmasiddhayaḥ svataḥ parataśca yogakṣemasā-dhanaṁ vyāsanapratikāraḥ śūnyaniveśopacayan daṇḍakārān-ugrahaścet.²⁵ It would thus appear that the amātyas stand for the governmental machinery.

The third element janapada which literally means 'tribal settlement', is mentioned as rāṣṭra in post-Mauryan texts along with six elements of the state (Mbh. Śāntiparvan, 60. 3-4),²⁶ as simply jana in the Yājñavalkyaśāṁhitā.²⁷ While the term rāṣṭra means territory, jana stands for

23. KNS. IV. 25 - 27, 34.

24. Ibid., IV. 30 - 31.

25. AS. Vol. II, BK. VIII. 1, P. 84.

26. R.S. Sharma, Political Ideas and Institutions in ancient India, Delhi, 1959, P. 18.

27. Yājñavalkya Śāṁhitā, I, 353.

population. So janapada should include both territory and population. In connection with the settlement of the janapada, Kauṭilya refers to the village as the smallest unit of territory or janapada and other larger units are samgrahaṇa, karvaṭika, droṇamukha, and sthāṇīya, which are constituted of ten, two hundred, four hundred and eight hundred villages respectively.²⁸ Kauṭilya emphasises that the janapada should be predominantly populated by the cultivators [Śūdrakarṣakaprāyaṃ grāmaṃ nivesayet],²⁹ although there should live other classes of people including priestly class, ruling class and other professional groups who should be donated land in the newly settled territory certainly in lieu of their service to the community.

The fourth element is mentioned as durga which is called pura by Manu.³⁰ But as a synonym of pura, durga, should be understood in the sense of 'fortified capital'. This meaning can also be inferred from the two independent sections, viz. durgavidhāna and durganiveśa sections in Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra. While the former refers to the

28. AŚ. Vol. I, BK. II. 1, P. 26.

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid. Vol. I, BK. II. 3, P. 29; MS. IX. 294.

construction of fortresses,³¹ the latter refers to the planning and layout of the fortified capital.³² The distinction between the janapada and pura seems to have been made out in the Śānti Parva, the former denoting the countryside and the latter the town.³³ It has been stated by Kauṭilya that the janapada should be guarded by forts or durgas.

Kośa or treasury appears as the fifth constituent of the state. According to Kauṭilya, all activities of the state depend upon the treasury [Kośapūrvāssarvārambhāḥ]³⁴ and he enumerates seven legitimate sources of income to the royal exchequer.³⁵ Treasury should be always filled with gold and other precious jewelleries so as to stand the strain of expenditure in emergency, for instance, in the time of natural calamities³⁶ and foreign invasions. Kauṭilya emphasises upon the necessity of the financial prosperity

31. AŚ. Vol. I, BK. II. 3, P. 29.

32. Ibid. BK. II. 4, P. 30.

33. Mbh., Śānti parvan, ~~pp.~~ 69. 63.

34. AŚ. Vol. I, BK. II. 8, P. 36.

35. Ibid. BK. II. 6, P. 33.

36. Ibid., VI. I, P. 32.

of the state for maintaining the military force [Kośamūlo
hi danḍah]³⁷ and thus maintains a vital link between
the two elements, Kośa and Bala (or Danḍa).

Danḍa or coercive power, mainly in the form of
military force, appears as the sixth constituent which is
sometimes bracketted with Kośa in political treatises.³⁸
According to Kauṭilya, Danḍa consists of hereditary, hired,
forest and corporation soldiers and comprises infantry,
chariots, elephants and cavalry.³⁹ Śānti Parvan of the
Mahābhārata states that the army comprises elephants, horses,
chariots, infantry, navy, forced labour, indigenous and
hired soldiers and, therefore, it is described as aṣṭāṅga
bala.⁴⁰ The Kṣatriyas are considered as the martial class
in all the texts, Brāhmanical and Buddhist. In times of
emergency, Manu allows even the Brahmins and Vaiśyas, but
not the Śūdras, to bear arms [Śāstram dvijātibhirgrāhyaṁ
dharmo yatroparudhyate dvijātīnāṁ varṇānāṁ viplave
kālakārite].⁴¹ Kauṭilya, on the other hand, recommends

37. Ibid. BK. VIII. 1, P. 69.

38. KNS. VIII. 1.

39. R.S. Sharma, Political Ideas and Institutions in ancient
India, Delhi, 1959, P. 20.

40. Mbh. Śānti Parvan, 121. 43.

41. MS. VIII. 348.

the recruitment of both Vaiśyas and Śūdras into the army on consideration of their numerical strength. [/bahulasāraṁ vā Vaiśya-Śūdrabalā niti].⁴²

The seventh element mentioned by Kauṭilya is mitra, also known as suhṛt in some texts. According to Kauṭilya, the ally should be hereditary, not artificial, one with whom there is no possibility of rupture and who is ready to stand by the king when situation demands it. [/Pitrpaitāmaḥ nītyāṁ vaśyamadvaidhyaṁ mahallaghusamutthamiti mitrasampat].⁴³

This type of mitra is called sahaja mitra. But, sometimes, the king had to make diplomatic relation through political and matrimonial alliances with neighbouring kingdoms to safeguard the political interests of his own domain. The existence of a state, however, depends upon its securing a proper balance of power by making suitable alliances.

It is thus clear that ancient Indian political thinkers regarded the state as composed of seven limbs, among which svāmī (king) occupied the most superior position. Kauṭilya says, 'the king is the state' [/Rājā rājyamiti]

42. AŚ. Vol. II, BK. IX. 2, P. 81.

43. Ibid. BK. VI. 1, P. 32.

prakṛtisamkṣepa/7.⁴⁴ While Kauṭilya attaches more importance to the preceding element than the succeeding one, the political thinkers of post-Maurya and Gupta times consider the seven elements complementary to each other without giving precedence to a particular element. This may be explained by the fact that centralisation of administrative power in the Maurya period was followed by decentralisation at a later period.

An attempt may be made to determine the nature of the state in ancient Bengal in the light of the epigraphic records. Although we hardly find explicit mention of seven elements of the state, the state-machinery is well-represented in the Gupta, post-Gupta and Pāla-Sena records by a large number of offices and official designations. The king (rājā or mahārājā) or svāmī stands supreme in all the epigraphs, under whose patronage the land-donation charters were executed. Amātya includes a large number of officers, such as Uparika,⁴⁵ Bhogapati⁴⁶ (provincial governor)

44. Ibid. BK. VIII. 2, P. 70.

45. Dāmodarpur C.P.s of the Gupta period, SI. Vol. I,
PP. 284, 285, 328, 338.

46. Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla, CBI., P. 100.

Tadāyuktaka⁴⁷ (district-officer) Audraṅgika⁴⁸ (collector of udraṅga meaning tax on permanent tenants or principal tax), Hiraṇyasāmudāyika⁴⁹ (collector of revenue in cash), Ṣaṣṭhādhikṛta⁵⁰ (collector of king's grain which was one-sixth of the produce), Mahākṣapatalika⁵¹ (Accounts officer), Mahākaraṇādhyakṣa⁵² (officer in the Secretariat), Jyeṣṭha - kāyastha⁵³ (head of the department of records), Mahādharma-dhyakṣa⁵⁴ (Judge), Mahāsāndhivigrahika⁵⁵ (Minister of War and Peace), Officers-in-charge of the Police-department, viz. Dauḥśādhāsāadhanika⁵⁶ (those who catch dangerous robbers, whom it is difficult to secure)⁵⁷, Daṇḍasakti (police-officer),

47. Dāmodarpur C.P. of Budhagupta, SI. Vol. I, P. 328.

48. IEG., P. 37; cf. Mallasārul C.P. of Vijayasena, Ibid., P. 360.

49. Ibid.

50. Khalimpur C.P. CBI., P. 100.

51. Tarpandighi C.P. of Lakṣmaṇasena, IB., P. 102.

52. Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa, Ibid., P. 153.

53. Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla, CBI., P. 100.

54. Mādhāinagar C.P. of Lakṣmaṇasena, IB., P. 111.

55. Jājilpādā C.P. of Gopāla II, JAS. XVII, P. 137ff.

56. Ibid.

57. IEG., P. 85.

Dāṇḍapāśika⁵⁸ or Dāṇḍapāṇika⁵⁹ (officer entrusted with the punishment of criminals), Cauroddharaṇika (officer in charge of the recovery of stolen property or an officer empowered with levying fines from thieves),⁶⁰ and also Officers-in-charge of different branches of the Army, viz. Mahāsenapati,⁶¹ Mahāpīlupati⁶² (Chief of the elephant corps), Mahāvīyūhapati⁶³ (Chief master of battle of arrays), Mahādaṇḍanāyaka⁶⁴ (Commander of forces), Balādhyakṣa (Officer-in-charge of the army), Nāvādhyakṣa⁶⁵ (Admiral in charge of the royal fleet), Hastyaśvoṣṭra-nauyala-vyāpṛtaka (Military officer in charge of the elephant, horse and camel corpse),⁶⁶ Sainikasaṅghamukhya⁶⁷ (Commander in charge of different regiments), or, Executive officers

58. Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla, CBI., P. 100.

59. Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa, IB., P. 153.

60. IEG., P. 71, cf. Nālandā C.P. of Dharmapāla, EI. XXIII, P. 290ff.

61. Belāva C.P. of Bhojavarman, IB., P. 21.

62. Ibid.

63. Rāmpāl C.P. of Śrīcandra, Ibid., P. 5.

64. Nālandā C.P. of Dharmapāla, EI. XXIII, P. 290ff.

65. Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla, CBI., P. 100.

66. IEG., P. 127, cf. Bāṅgaḍa C.P. of Mahīpāla I, CBI., P. 202.

67. Irdā C.P. of Nayapāla, EI. XXII, P. 150ff.

like Rājaputra,⁶⁸ Kumārāmātya,⁶⁹ Kārttākṛtika (probably an officer who reported to the king about the progress of important undertakings),⁷⁰ Dūta-praiṣaṇika (Officer who despatched Dūtas or messengers),⁷¹ Dūtaka,⁷² Abhitvaramāṇa (letter-carrier or a special kind of messenger),⁷³ Vṛddha-dhānuṣka (Military officer-in-charge of bowmen),⁷⁴ Officers serving in the department of public works, viz. Āvasathika (Superintendents of avasathas, i.e. colleges or dharmaśālās; Supervisor of the royal palace and other government buildings),⁷⁵ Devadronīśambaddha (Officer entrusted with temples and sacred tanks; Superintendent of temple property),⁷⁶

68. Monghyr C.P. of Devapāla, CBI., P. 118.

69. Mallasārul C.P. of Vijayasena, CBI., P. 88.

70. IEG., P. 149, cf. Mallasārul C.P. of Vijayasena, CBI., P. 88.

71. IEG., P. 104, cf. Monghyr C.P. of Devapāla, CBI., P. 118.

72. Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla, CBI., P. 100.

73. IEG., P. 2, cf. Mānāhali C.P. of Madanapāla, CBI., P. 215.

74. HAB., P. 328, cf. Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa, IB., P. 153.

75. IEG., P. 40, cf. Mallasārul C.P. of Vijayasena, CBI., P. 88.

76. HAB., P. 323; IEG., P. 88, cf. Mallasārul C.P. of Vijayasena, CBI., P. 88.

Pānīyāgārika (Superintendent of water-house or of rest house),⁷⁷ vāsāgārika (Officer-in-charge of residential buildings; Officer-in-charge of king's bed-chamber)⁷⁸ etc., and Officers related to various religious performances viz. Āvasathika (one who keeps the domestic fire or avasathya, burning with daily offerings),⁷⁹ śāntyāgārika or śāntyā-gārādhikṛta⁸⁰ (priest-in-charge of the room for the performance of propitiatory rites) etc. All of them seem to have discharged the functions of Amātyas or Karma-sacivas as they are known from the Chapters on Adhyakṣas in Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra. [Amātyasampadopetāssarva-dhyakṣāśśaktiḥ karmasu niyojyāḥ]⁸¹ The Adhyakṣas in the list of officials occurring in the inscriptions are mentioned without an individual reference. [Viṣayapatyā-dīnanyāṁśca sakalarāja-padopojivinodhyakṣapracāroktāniha-kīrtitān ...]⁸² Besides, the epigraphs specifically refer

77. HAB. P. 328; IEG. P. 234, cf. Rāṁganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa, IB. P. 153.

78. HAB. P. 328; IEG. P. 366, cf. Rāṁganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa, IB. P. 153.

79. BRS., P. XX, cf. Mallasārul C.P. of Vijayasena, SIVAJIP. 360.

80. Sunderban C.P. of Lakṣmaṇasena, CBI., P. 290; Belāva C.P. of Bhojavarman, IB., P. 21.

81. AŚ. Vol. I, BK. II. 30, P. 37.

82. Mādhāinagar C.P. of Lakṣmaṇasena, IB., P. 111.

to Rājāmātya⁸³ (king's minister, companion of the king),
Kumārāmātya⁸⁴ (a group of officers serving under the
Kumāras, or Amātya enjoying the status of a Kumāra) and
simply Amātya⁸⁵ who seem to have held executive posts
although the nature of their functions ~~are~~^{is} not precisely
indicated. In the Dāmodarpur copper plates Kumārāmātyas
seem to have been appointed district-officers under the
Uparika or provincial governor.

Mantrin or Mahāmantrin i.e. Matisacivas or counsellors
who formed a distinct ministerial class also find mention
in Bengal epigraphs.⁸⁶ The Bādal Pillar Inscr.⁸⁷ of the
time of Nārāyaṇapāla refers to the members of a Brahmin
family who held hereditary post of Counsellors under the
Pāla kings.

83. Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla, CBI., P. 100.

84. Dāmodarpur C.P.s of Kumārāgupta I, SI, Vol. I, PP. 284, 286.

85. Monghyr C.P. of Devapāla, CBI., P. 118.

86. Bāṅgaḍa C.P. of Mahīpāla. I, Ibid., P. 204; Āmḡāchi C.P.
of Vigrahapāla I, EI. XV, P. 295ff; Bhuvaneśvar Prasasti
of Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva, IB., P. 25ff.

87. GL., P. 70.

The territory, recognised as one of the elements of the state, is represented by the expression janapadān⁸⁸ often occurring in the land-grant charters.

The existence of durga or fort is proved by the reference to Koṭṭapāla⁸⁹ (officer-in-charge of a fort). The expression "Jayaskandhāvāra", mentioned in the Khalimpur C.P. with reference to Pāṭaliputra, appears to suggest the importance of the fortified city or capital as the Victory-Camp, where from the king might undertake his military campaigns for conquests.

The existence of Kośa or treasury may be derived from the epigraphic references to Revenue officers or Accounts officers whose functions seem to have been indirectly or directly connected with the royal treasury.

Danḍa or force is represented by the mention of the officers serving in different wings of the military department viz. army, elephantry and navy, as already referred to.

88. CBI. PP. 293, 306.

89. Bhāgalpur C.P. of Nārāyaṇapāla, Ibid., P. 167.

Mitra or ally, the seventh element might include the king's companions (Rājāmātya etc.) and feudal lords (Sāmanta, Mahāsāmanta, Rājarājanyaka, Rāṇaka etc.). Diplomatic alliance, in matrimonial form, of the Pālas with the ruling dynasties of South India is evident from the epigraphic records. The Monghyr C.P. of Devapāla informs us that matrimonial alliance was made between Dharmapāla and Rāṣṭrakūṭa Paravāla who gave his daughter Rannādevī in marriage with the Pāla king Śrī Paravalasya duhituḥ kṣitipatinā Rāṣṭrakūṭa-tilakasya | Rannādevyāḥ Pānirjagrhe gr̥hamedhinā tena, v.9.7.⁹⁰ Again, we come to know from the Mānāhali C.P. of Madanapāla that Rājyapāla, son of Nārāyaṇapāla, married Bhāgyadevī, daughter of Rāṣṭrakūṭa Tuṅgarāja. Tasmāt mahasām Rāṣṭrakūṭān-vayendostuṅgasyottuṅga-maulerduhitaritanayo Bhāgya-devyām Prasūtaḥ, v.8.7.⁹¹

Although Kauṭilya does not mention Purohita as a separate organ of the state, he emphasises on the importance of the functions discharged by the royal priest.⁹² In Bengal

90. Ibid., pp. 116 - 117.

91. Ibid. P. 213.

92. AŚ. Vol. I, BK. I. 9, P. 9.

epigraphs, however, Purohita finds specific mention along with other officials who formed the bureaucracy. Purohita or Mahāpurohita finds mention in the Copper-plate grants of the Kāmboja-Varman-Sena rulers who were patrons of Brāhmanism. But, in the list of officials occurring in the records of the Pālas and Candras, who were patrons of Buddhism, we hardly find any reference to Purohita. It remains, however, true that the Pāla-Candra rulers were committed to maintain the social order based upon Varṇa or caste as enjoined in the Brāhmanical texts. The Pāla kings were advised by the Brahmin counsellors who were well-versed in Śrutis and the Smṛtis.

Varṇas in relation to the State :

It has been stated in the Purāṇas that as different varṇas did not observe their respective functions and came into mutual conflict, Lord Brahmā prescribed coercion (daṇḍa) and war (yuddha) as the profession of the Kṣatriyas,⁹³ which indicates the origin of the state for the maintenance

93. Brahmā tamarthaṁ buddhvā yāthātathyenavai prabhuḥ,
Kṣatriyāṇāṁ balaṁ daṇḍaṁ yuddhamādiśat, Vāyu Purāṇa,
i. VIII. 161.

of the social order based on the Varṇa-system. In the Monghyr C.P. of Devapāla, it has been quoted in verse 5 that Dharmapāla followed the rules of caste laid down in the scriptures in order to restore in order the four varṇas who had deviated from their original position as prescribed by law-givers [Śāstrārthabhājā calatonuśāsyā Varṇān Pratiṣṭhāpayatā svadharme]. It reflects the primary duty of a king representing the state in early period.

It appears further, from the available records, that the four varṇas had substantial participatory role in the organisation of the state-machinery that was put in charge of the amātyas of different cadres. Although Kauṭilya does not specifically refer to the caste of the amātyas, an obvious item common to the list of requisites laid down by him and other political thinkers whom he quotes is the noble birth. It would not be unreasonable to hold that the upper three Varṇas claimed the noble birth. Megasthenes and Arrian also observed that the avenues to higher posts of the Executive and Judiciary were open only to the higher classes of the community.⁹⁴ But the epigraphic records suggest

94. J.W. Mc Crindle, Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian, 2nd Ed., Calcutta, 1960, PP. 85, 138.

that the Śūdras were not debarred from participation in some essential functions of the government. The nature of functions discharged by the officials listed in the land-grant charters of Bengal gives us to understand the position held by the four Varṇas in the administration.

The rulers' caste was generally known as Kṣatriya. Even if members of some lower castes were raised to the status of rulers, either on a wave of reaction against the existing ruling class or on account of their growing wealth and power, they gradually came to be introduced as belonging to the Kṣatriya caste by the Brāhmanical ideologists.⁹⁵ So far as the epigraphic records are concerned, there is hardly any specific reference to the caste of the ruling dynasty except in a few cases. Information furnished by different records including epigraphic records in regard to the origin of the Pālas lead us to hold either Kṣatriya or Śūdra origin of the Pālas.⁹⁶ The Kamauli Grant⁹⁷ of Vaidyadeva indicates that Vigrahapāla III was born in the solar race Etasya

95. R.S. Sharma, Political Ideas and Institutions in ancient India, Delhi, 1959, P. 186.

96. I.H.Q. IX (1933), PP. 479 - 487.

97. GL., P. 127ff.

dakṣiṇadr̥śo vaṁśe mihirasya jātavān pūrvam Vigrahapālo ...V.2_7,
while the Rāmacarita of Sandhyākaranandin describes Dharma-
pāla as Samudra-kula-dīpa (the light of the race of ocean),
[Tatkuladīpo nṛpatirabhūd dharmo dhāmavānivekṣākuḥ, v.4,
commentary : tatkuladīpa ityādi Samudrakuladīpa dharmo
dharmanāmā Dharmapāla iti yāvat_7,⁹⁸ indicating his descent
from the Solar race, as samudra or sāgara which is a synonym
of Sūrya (Mbh. III, 152). Moreover, the commentary on verse
17, ch. I of the Rāmacarita expressly speaks of Kṣatriya
origin of Rāmapāla [Śrīpatiḥ pāṛthivo yo nābhiḥ Kṣatriya-
stasmāt sambhūtaḥ vidhiriveti Śleṣopamā Anyatra Śrīpater-
Vāsudevasya nābhito-avayavādudbhūtaḥ Śeṣam sugamam Ubhayatrāpi
samam_7.⁹⁹ If we consider the combined evidence of the
Kamauli Grant of Vaidyadeva and the Rāmacarita, it would
appear that the Pālas, being descended from the Solar race,
were regarded as Kṣatriyas. But the Āini-Ākbari of Abul Fazl
informs us that the Pālas belonged to the Kāyeth or Kāyastha
caste.¹⁰⁰ The Āryamañjuśrī - mūlakalpa describes the Pālas

98. RC; P. 3.

99. Ibid., P. 11.

100. BI., P. 267.

as Dāsajīvi,¹⁰¹ that is, they belonged to the menial or Śūdra caste. It is difficult to ascertain, due to lack of corroborative evidence, whether the evidence furnished by the Buddhist text, or, the medieval historical work, may be depended upon. On the other hand, it remains true that the attribution of Kṣatriyahood to a ruling dynasty was the usual practice in the early medieval period. Not the early, but later Pāla records have claimed for the Pāla rulers, like their contemporary Pratihāras, origin from the Solar race. The Candra and Varman rulers of East Bengal are also found in their records to have claimed Kṣatriya origin. In fact, the term Rājanya and Kṣatriya became synonymous since very early times. The records of the Senas, however, call them Brahma-Kṣatriya, Karṇāṭa-Kṣatriya or simply Kṣatriya.¹⁰² The investigation of scholars has revealed that the Senas, originating from Karṇāṭa (modern Mysore) were probably Brahmins but later adopted the Kṣatriya-occupation.

101. Ibid., Bhupendranath Datta, Bāṅgalāra Itihāsa, Calcutta, 1383 B.C., P. 24.

102. cf. (i) Brahmakṣatriyāṇāmajani kulaśīrodāma Sāmantasena, 1.5, Deopārā Inscr. of Vijayasena, IB. P. 46. (ii) Varṇse Karṇāṭakṣatriyāṇāmajani kulaśīrodāma Sāmantasenaḥ, Mādhāinagar C.P. of Lakṣmaṇasena, 1.7, Ibid., P. 110.

The vassals and nobles like Sāmanta, Mahāsāmanta, Rāṇaka and Rājanyaka generally belonged to the Kṣatriya caste, although there might have an exception to this rule. In the Tipperā C.P. of Lokanātha, reference has been made to a Brahmin feudatory Mahāsāmanta Pradoṣa-sārman who sought the permission of his master Lokanātha to grant him a plot of land for erecting the temple of god Anantanārā-yaṇa and for the settlement of more than hundred Vedic Brahmins. Lokanātha himself is introduced as Karaṇa. It is suggested by some that Sāmanta Lokanātha belonged to the Karaṇa caste sprung from the union of Vaiśya male and Śūdra female. But, keeping in view the genealogy of the family to which he belonged, Lokanātha cannot be held to be the son of a Vaiśya father and Śūdra mother, as his great grandfather is said to have born in a Brahmin family.¹⁰³ But Lokanātha's mother, being descended from a Pāraśava father, was Śūdra by caste. The Tipperā C.P. of Lokanātha thus indicates that Lokanātha, being the son of Brāhmaṇa father and Śūdra mother, was not a Kṣatriya by birth but rose to the status of a semi-independent feudatory ruler in seventh-century south-east Bengal.

103. EI. XV, P. 306, V. 2.

The Kṣatriyas, traditionally known as the military caste, seem to have played the most dominant role in the military (Bala) organisation in a state. Kauṭilya expressly enjoins that the best army is purely composed of the soldiers of the Kṣatriya caste.¹⁰⁴ The post in the army was that of Senāpati (Commander), whose appointment was restricted by later authorities to the Brāhmin or Kṣatriya caste. [Senāpatiḥ kāryo Brāhmaṇaḥ Kṣatriyo'thavā].¹⁰⁵ In the epigraphs of Bengal we find mention of military officers like Senāpati, (Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla), Mahāsenāpati (Bhāgalpur C.P. of Nārāyaṇapāla), Mahādaṇḍanāyaka (Ibid), Mahāvīyūhapati, (Belāva C.P. of Bhojavarman), Mahāpīlupati (Ibid), Balādhyakṣa (Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla) and Nāvādhyakṣa (Ibid), holding prominent positions in different wings of the military department. The functions discharged by Mahādaṇḍanāyaka seem to have been similar to those of Senāpati. But the references to both official designations in the same epigraph seem to indicate some qualitative distinction between them. Mahādaṇḍanāyaka might have been in charge of the force that was responsible for

104. AŚ. Vol. II, BK. VI. 1, P. 32.

105. Agni Purāṇa, Bibliotheca Indica, Calcutta, 1882, 220. 1.

maintaining law and order within the state, whereas Senāpati was invested with the authority of conducting military operations outside the state. Officers like Danḍaśakti (Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla), Dāṇḍapāśika (Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla), Dāṇḍika (Monghyr C.P. of Devapāla), Dauḥsādhasādhanika (Bāngaḍa C.P. of Mahīpāla I) and Cauroddharanika (Tarpandighi C.P. of Lakṣmaṇasena) seem to have functioned under Mahādāṇḍanāyaka (Monghyr C.P. of Devapāla), while the soldiers belonging to different categories, infantry, cavalry, elephant-corps and charioteer, were under the command of Senāpati, the chief of the Military staff. The soldiers seem to have been recruited from among the Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and even Śūdras.

The civil administration was run jointly by the Kṣatriyas and Brahmins. It has been stated by Kauṭilya that royal power triumphs even without arms and ever remains invincible, when it is held up by the Brāhmaṇas, is sanctified by the counsel of ministers and follows the precepts of śāstras [Brāhmaṇena idhitam kṣatram mantrimantrābhi-mantritam | Jayatyajitamatyantam śāstrānugamaśāstritam] 106. The Bādāl Pillar Inscr¹⁰⁷ of the time of Nārāyaṇapāla refers

106. AŚ. Vol. I, BK. I. 9, P. 9.

107. GL., P. 70ff.

to a line of Brahmin ministers serving under the Pālas on hereditary basis. Although they are not specifically mentioned in the records as mantrins or sacivas, the functions discharged by them seem to suggest that they served as mantrin or counsellors under the Pāla rulers.

Garga was the first member of a Brahmin family to serve as a minister under Dharmapāla. The next three generations of the same Brahmin family, Darbhapāṇi, his son Someśvara and grandson Kedāramiśra, are stated to have achieved for Devapāla country-wide conquest by their wise counsel.

Kedāramiśra was also associated with Śūrapāla. His son Guravamīśra looked after the administration of Nārāyaṇapāla, showing skill in and devotion to polity. He also proved his martial abilities in the battle-field Udvāsitaḥ sapadi yena yudhi dviṣāṇca nissīma-vikrama-dhanena bhaṭābhīdhānaḥ,

V.22_7.¹⁰⁸ Again, the Bhuvaneśvar Praśasti of Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva informs us that Ādideva, the grandfather of Bhavadeva II, served as the Chief Minister and Minister-in-charge of War and Peace under a Candra king Yo Vaṅgarāja-rājyaśrīviśrāma-sacivaḥ śuciḥ, Mahāmantri mahāpātrama-bandhyaḥ sāndhivigrahī, v.10_7¹⁰⁹ and his son Govardhana

108. Ibid.

109. IB., P. 33.

also seems to have been associated in an official capacity with the same dynasty. But Govardhana's son Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva served under the Varman rulers of East Bengal. Apart from being a versatile genius in a good many branches of learning, he was also conversant in military science [Śāstreṣvāyur-vedāstraveda-prabhṛtiṣu kṛtādhiradvitīyo-ayameva, Bhuvaneśvar Praśasti of Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva, V.23]. To judge from the internal data of the Bādal Praśasti, it was the intellectual superiority of the Brahmins, especially political wisdom grown out of their proficiency in interpreting Brahmanical laws laid down in the Vedic and Smṛti literature, as well as their martial abilities and, above all, their dignified personality, raised them to such an eminent position that few rulers could afford to run the state-machinery without their advice. In the Kamauli Grant¹¹⁰ of Vaidyadeva, we find reference to another line of hereditary ministers, namely, Yogadeva, Bodhideva and Vaidyadeva, who served under Vigraphapāla III, Rāmapāla and Kumārapāla respectively. Yogadeva himself is said to have been appointed on hereditary basis [Yasya vaṁśa-krameṇābhūt sacivah śāstravittamah, Kamauli Grant of Vaidyadeva, V.3].

110. EI. II, P. 350ff.

But, in the absence of any positive evidence, it cannot be said with certainty to which caste did those ministers belong. Vaidyadeva, who served as a saciva under Kumārapāla, is described in the inscription as the sharp-rayed sun into the lotuses of the Assembly of sacivas. [Sacivasamāja-saroja-tigmabhānuḥ, Kamauli Grant of Vaidyadeva, V.10]. He proved his military genius by winning victory against the enemy in a naval battle in South Bengal [Yasyānuttara-Vaṅga-saṅgara-jaye nauvāṭahīhīravatrastairddikkaribhiśca yannacalitaṁ cennāsti tadgamyabhūḥ, Kamauli Grant of Vaidyadeva, V.11]. By defeating Tigmyadeva in battle, he succeeded in setting himself up as an independent ruler in Kāmarūpa [Śrī Tigmyadevanṛpater-vikṛtaṁ niśāmya Gaudeśvareṇa bhuvi tasya nareśvaratve Śrī Vaidyadeva urukīrtirayaṁ niyuktaḥ Katipayadinairdatvā jiṣṇuḥ prayāṇamasau drutam | Tamavanīpatiṁ jītvā yuddhe babhūva mahīpatirnijabhuja-parispandaiḥ sākṣāddivaspati-vikramaḥ, Kamauli C.P. of Vaidyadeva, VV. 13,14]. It appears, therefore, that the qualities possessed by the ministers of the Deva family are at par with those of the Brahmin counsellors associated with the Pāla rulers. Besides the post of counsellor, the Brahmins sometimes held high official position in the State. For instance, the Bangaon copper-plate¹¹¹ of Vigrahapāla III

111. EI. XXIX, P. 48ff.

refers to a Brahmin officer named Ghaṇṭiśa who donated land to a Brāhmaṇa out of his own land (hala). The position of the royal priest was as important as that of the counsellor. We find references to Mahāpurohita and Purohita in the Kāmboja-Varman-Sena records. They were obviously Brahmin high officials who seem to have taken overall charge of supervising and guiding the religious life in Janapada. Śāntyāgārika¹¹² or Śāntyāgārādhikṛta¹¹³ (priest-in-charge of the room for the performance of propitiatory rites), Mahātantrādhikṛta¹¹⁴ (high priest-in-charge of religious rites; tantra literally means (a work teaching magical and mystical rituals related to divine and supernatural objects)¹¹⁵ and Āvasathika (priest who keeps the domestic fire burning with daily offerings) probably served under Purohita or the Mahāpurohita of the state concerned.

The participation of different Varṇas in the administration of justice deserves our consideration. Appointment of judges used to be made from among the castes in order

112. Sunderban C.P. of Lakṣmaṇasena, CBI., P. 290.

113. Belāva C.P. of Bhojavarman, IB., P. 21.

114. Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa, Ibid., P. 153.

115. M.M. Williams, Sanskrit English Dictionary, Delhi, 1979, P. 436.

of precedence. According to Manu and Yājñavalkya, a Brahmin is to be appointed a judge, failing him a Kṣatriya and failing a Kṣatriya a Vaiśya might be recruited as judge, but, on no account, could a Śūdra be permitted to hold this position. Mahādharmaśāstra or Dharmādhikāra, often mentioned in the records, discharged the functions of Chief Justice who, in all probability, belonged to a Brahmin caste. The Nidhānpur C.P.¹¹⁶ of Bhāskaravarman refers to Nyāyakaraṇika (scribe or an official in the judiciary department) Janārdanasvāmī whose name-ending suggests his Brahmin origin.

The Vaiśyas had their traditional occupations, namely, cattle-breeding, agriculture, trade and commerce [Kṛṣipāśūpālye vaṇijyā ca]¹¹⁷. They were presumably encouraged by the state to remain engaged in their allotted duties, so that production and distribution of wealth might not suffer decline. However, the association of the Vaiśyas with some of the departments of administration cannot be altogether ruled out. The services of the Vaiśyas with their long-standing experience in hereditary occupations like agriculture and trade seem to have been requisitioned by the state for

116. CPS. P. 22.

117. AS. Vol. I, BK. I. 3, P. 4.

assessment of taxes to be levied upon agricultural produces, or import and export goods. If this be assumed, the Vaiśyas might have been appointed revenue-officers like Ṣaṣṭhā-dhikṛta¹¹⁸ (collector of king's grain-share which was one-sixth of the produce), Hiranyasāmu-dāyika¹¹⁹ (collector of revenue in cash), Audraṅgika¹²⁰ (collector of Udrāṅga, probably a tax on permanent tenants), Śaulkika¹²¹ (collector of tolls and custom-dues), Tarika¹²² (probably collector of ferry-dues), Vyāpāra-kāraṇḍya¹²³ (customs-officer). Again, the epigraphic records leave little scope ~~of~~^{for} doubt that the Karaṇikas or Kāyasthas were often put in charge of Accounts and State-records. The Karaṇa-kāyasthas,¹²⁴ according to the traditional Varnasamkara theory, derived their descent from an admixture of Vaiśya male and Śūdra female. Therefore, Mahākṣapaṭalika¹²⁵ (Accounts-officer), referred to in the

118. Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla, CBI. P. 100.

119. Mallasarul C.P. of Vijayasena, SI. Vol. I, P. 360.

120. Ibid.

121. Mānāhali C.P. of Maṇapāla, CBI., P. 215.

122. Ibid.

123. Faridpur C.P. (no.2) of Dharmāditya, SI. Vol. I, P. 354.

124. Guṇaighar C.P. of Vainyagupta, Ibid. P. 334.

125. Tarpandighi C.P. of Lakṣmaṇasena, IB., P. 96.

Bhāgalpur C.P. of Nārāyanapāla, seems to have represented the Vaiśya community in the administration. Further, the administration at the provincial (Bhukti) and district (Viṣaya) levels could not but take the counsel of the guilds of merchants and craftsmen represented by Nagaraśreṣṭhin (Guild-President), Sārthavāha (Caravan-trader), and Prathama-Kulika (Chief artisan) who are mentioned in the Dāmodarpur C.P. grants of the Gupta period. The Advisory Board at the district-level also included Prathama-Kāyastha (chief scribe) who probably represented the Kāyastha-community and served in the capacity of the Chief Secretary.¹²⁶ In the Faridpur copper-plates of the post-Gupta period, the Chief traders [Pradhāna-vyāpārīṇaḥ]¹²⁷ are found to have been invited to witness the land-transactions. A section of the Vaiśya community seems to have been represented by Mahāmahattaras and Mahattaras, that is, the land-owning classes referred to in the land-grant charters. It is known from the Dāmodarpur C.P. of Budhagupta (G.E. 163 = 482 A.D.) that Mahattaras were prominent members of aṣṭakulādhikaraṇa, i.e., 'the board of village administration'. It appears from the Faridpur records that Viṣaya-mahattaras were invariably consulted by the government at the time of

126. SI. Vol.I, PP. 284, 286.

127. Faridpur C.P. of Gopacandra, Ibid., P. 358.

sale, purchase and donation of land in their own jurisdiction. In the Pāla records also (Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla) Mahāmahattara and Mahattara seem to have been associated with the royal officials. It may, therefore, be held that the mercantile as well as land-owning classes occupied the most prestigious position in the society and wielded considerable power in the local administration. As already pointed out, these two classes mostly comprised members of the Vaiśya caste.

As the Śūdras were enjoined by the law-givers to put in menial services to the upper castes, their services requisitioned for the state were befitting to their social position. Ordinary soldiers in the army were often recruited from among the Śūdras. Kautilya avers that enlistment of Vaiśyas and Śūdras in the army is important on account of their numerical strength [Bahulasāraṁ vā Vaiśyaśūdra-balamiti],¹²⁸ although Manu does not recommend the enrolment of the Śūdras in the army. In Bengal epigraphs, we find indirect references to different categories of soldiers, many of whom seem to have represented the Śūdra community. The lowest rank in the Army was swelled by employment-seekers from among the Śūdras. As animal-husbandry was one of the

128. AŚ. Vol. II, BK. IX. 2, P. 81.

prescribed occupations of the Śūdras, according to the Arthaśāstra [Śūdrasya dvijātisúśrūṣā vārtā kārukuśīlavakarma ca; kṛṣipāśupālye vaṇijyā ca vārtā]¹²⁹ they might have been recruited in the military department to look after the animals which were brought in the army for transport and other services. These animals were in charge of Superintendent called Kiśoravaḍapā-gomahiṣājāvīkādhyakṣa (Bhāgalpur C.P. of Nārāyaṇapāla). Again, the Arab traveller Sulaiman informs us that several thousands of men were employed in the troops of Devapāla to wash the clothes of the soldiers.¹³⁰ Obviously, this type of menial service was expected from the Śūdras. In the Police-department, the low-grade servicemen like Cāṭas and Bhaṭas (pāik and piyādā)¹³¹ seem to have been Śūdras themselves.

The rise of a Śūdra leader to the headship of a state is attested by the Rāmacarita. We are informed that the Kaivarta chief Divya, a high official of the Pāla king Mahīpāla II, carved out an independent kingdom in Varendrī. The Kaivartas, according to Manu, were Śūdras of mixed origin.

129. AŚ. Vol. I, BK. I. 3, P. 4; BK. I. 4, P. 5.

130. HAB., P. 116.

131. IEG., PP. 67 - 68.

From the epigraphic records we may thus trace the participation of the Vaiśyas and Śūdras, directly or indirectly, in the task of running the state-machinery or in adding to the strength of some state-organs. But, as in society, so also in the government, the Brāhmaṇas and the Kṣatriyas continued to maintain jointly their most predominant position in the state as a whole.

Functions of the State :

In the society, the Kṣatriyas represented the ruling class, the Brāhmaṇas and Buddhist monks represented the intelligentsia or the intellectual class, the Vaiśyas represented the mercantile, artisan and land-owning classes, while the Śūdras formed the menial class. All these classes, in collaboration with each other, helped the state in its proper functioning. Ancient political thinkers emphasise that promotion of dhrama, artha and kāma should be the aim of the state. The state is to promote dhrama by encouraging virtue and morality, by extending help to the religious establishments, by doing public-works and by extending patronage to the literature and science. The promotion of artha was to be procured by developing trade, industry and agriculture and also by increasing national resources. The

state was to promote kāma by maintaining peace and order in the society, so that each individual felt security of his life and property and by offering encouragement to aesthetic culture by developing interest in fine-arts. An ideal state was thus expected to maintain peace and order and promote moral, material and aesthetic progress of the society.¹³² With a view to achieving these ends, the state had to co-ordinate agencies so as to fulfil a variety of functions in the interest of the society at large. The epigraphs, recording various official designations, give us to understand the existence of different government departments with the purpose of discharging the functions of the state at the Central, Provincial, District, Sub-divisional and even Village-levels. The administration may be broadly divided into two departments, namely, civil and military. The military department consisting of different branches like artillery, cavalry, elephantry and navy, already referred to, was for maintaining law and order within the state and for defending it against aggressions from outside. Among various departments in civil administration,

132. AS. Altekar, State and Government in ancient India,
Delhi, 1958, P. 48.

some were directly connected with the community in general. These were departments of Revenue, Accounts, Land-assessment and Land-survey, Public works, Justice and Police.

Law and order in the society :

The main objective of the state was to maintain law and order and ensure peace in society. This objective was fulfilled by the Police-department. Officers like Dauhsā-dhasādhanika, Cauroddharanika, Danḍasakti or Dāṇḍapāsika, Dāsāparādhika etc. were to put a check on the criminal activities in the society and, thus, stimulate a feeling of security of life and property. Law was administered by the Judicial department that was put in charge of Mahādharmā-dhyakṣa (Belāva C.P. of Bhojovarman). It appears that civil and criminal laws were in force separately. Dāsāparādhika, as suggested by some, was a judge dealing with ten offences, namely, theft, murder of women, adultery, use of abusive language, violation, of order, mixing of castes, illegal pregnancy, obscenity, assault and abortion.¹³³ Decisions enforced by the courts, both in civil and criminal cases, made the people conscious of the coercive power of the state.

133. IEG., P. 85.

The Dharmaśāstras provided laws for the people belonging to different varṇas. The lower castes often got heavier punishment than the upper ones for the same nature of offence. Due to lack of adequate evidence at our disposal, it is difficult to assume to what extent these discriminatory laws were applied by the government in Bengal during the period under our study. The law-books of the Gupta period softened some of these discriminations leading to some improvements in the legal status of the Śūdras.¹³⁴ The Buddhist Pāla rulers must not have encouraged these crude discriminations among the varṇas, as they were not in favour of the rigidity of the varṇa-system, although they traditionally upheld the order of the society based on it. It is significant that even the untouchables like Medas, Andhras and Caṇḍālas, were invited along with the people of higher castes of the society, to witness the land-transactions. It implies, no doubt, that in case of any legal dispute arising over donated land, the people, irrespective of their castes, were expected to act as witnesses in the law-court, as and when necessary. Equality in the eye of law seems to have been achieved to some extent at the initiative of the government.

134. R.S. Sharma, Śūdras in ancient India, Delhi, 1958, P. 240ff.

Social Economy :

As the economic life in Bengal was chiefly based upon the land-system, the state appears to have taken keen interest in bringing more and more land under cultivation by reclamation and liberal donations. In order to assess the annual income from land-revenue, the state had to run a separate department dealing with land-assessment, land-survey and land-transaction. The most important officers were Pustapālas or 'Record-keepers', who determined whether a particular plot of land should be sold or donated by the state or not. They were attached with the administration from the village to the district level. They maintained permanent registers or records of different types and plots of lands with boundaries and titles. In Kautilya's Arthaśāstra, we find reference to an official called Gopa corresponding to Pustapāla. Gopa was, however, in charge of keeping registers of five or ten villages within his jurisdiction. No doubt, the main object of such elaborate system was to ensure the realisation of land-revenues to which the king was entitled. The land was demarcated by an official called Darvīkarman (measurer of land),¹³⁵ referred to in the Baigrah C.P.¹³⁶ of the Gupta Year 128 (=448 A.D.). Pramātr¹³⁷ and

135. IEG., P. 84.

136. EI. XXI, P. 78.

137. Monghyr C.P. of Devapāla, CBI., P. 118.

Kṣetrapa¹³⁸ probably refer to surveyors of land. It indicates that there was a regular office for land-survey which was necessary for the purpose of fixing land-revenues.¹³⁹ Meticulous care with which the state used to **supervise** smooth functioning of the system of production in land and its assessment suggests that the society was, to a large extent, dependent upon the state for its economic well-being.

Public works :

The state used to spend a substantial part of the revenue collected from the people for their welfare by undertaking works of public utility. Epigraphic records furnish us incidental references to markets, canals excavated for water supply [Haṭṭa-pānakaiśca saha],¹⁴⁰ temples and monasteries which were the centres of Brāhmanical and Buddhist religion and learning. We find references to officers like Haṭṭapati,¹⁴¹ Pāniyāgārika,¹⁴² Devadronīśambaddha¹⁴³ who

138. Bāngaḍa C.P. of Mahīpāla I, Ibid., P. 202.

139. HAB., P. 314.

140. Dāmodarpur C.P. of G.E. 128 (448 A.D.), SI. Vol.I, P. 286.

141. Rāṅgang C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa, IB., P. 153.

142. Ibid.

143. Mallasārul C.P. of Vijayasena, SI. Vol.I, P. 360.

were in charge of looking into the affairs of market, water-chamber and temple-property respectively.¹⁴⁴ The government appears to have encouraged voluntary contributions from philanthropists by publicizing donations.¹⁴⁵

Public finance :

As all state-activities depended upon kośa or treasury [Kośapūrvāḥ sarvārambhāḥ],¹⁴⁶ the state was to follow well-defined revenue policy to strengthen its treasury. Revenue was derived from crown-lands and from lands that became state-property, when those were forfeited due to absence of any claimant, from state monopolies, such as forestry and mining, from state-owned industries, from tolls, fees and water-assessment, ceremonial offerings, tributes, fines and gifts.¹⁴⁷ In order to make the waste-land yield revenue, the king conferred ownership of land on those who cultivated it [Akṛtāni kartr̥bhyo nādeyāt].¹⁴⁸ Land-revenue formed the major portion of the total revenue. The land

144. IEG., PP. 234, 88.

145. Charles Drekmeir, Kingship and Community in Early India, Bombay, 1962, P. 266.

146. AS. Vol. I, BK. II. 8, P. 36.

147. Charles Drekmeir, op. cit., PP. 263-64.

148. AS. Vol. I, BK. II. 1, P. 26.

tax was usually collected in both cash and kind. Forced labour or viṣṭi was also considered as tax in case of those who were unable to pay the taxes in cash on demand. The epigraphic records throw much light on the revenue-system prevalent in Bengal. Land-revenue was collected by provincial governors designated as Bhogapati, Viṣayapati, Maṇḍalapati, Dāśagrāmika and Grāmapati. Bhogapati probably refers to an officer who collected the tax bhoga (periodical offerings).¹⁴⁹

Although the exact nature of these revenues cannot be ascertained, they are referred to in general terms as bhāga (king's share of the produce), bhoga (periodical offerings), kara (tax in general; according to Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra, periodical tax over and above king's grain-share emergency tax levied upon the villagers over and above the normal grain share, tax upon merchants' profits), hiraṇya (tax in cash) etc.¹⁵⁰ If the phrase bhāgabhogakara means a single levy, it might have been a tax collected in lieu of bhāga (grain-share) and bhoga (periodical offerings).¹⁵¹ In case of donated land, the donees were entitled to enjoy

149. HAB., P. 314.

150. IEG., PP. 47, 54, 145, 129.

151. Ibid., P. 48.

these taxes levied upon the people in general [Samastarājabhogakara-hiraṇyapratyāyasahita].¹⁵² It has also been expressly stated in the inscriptions that cultivators in the donated land should make all their dues over to the donees instead of the king himself [Prativāsibhiśca kṣetrakaraiḥ ājñāśravaṇavidheyībhūya yathākālāṃ samucitabhāga-bhoga-kara-hiraṇyādi-pratyāyopanayaḥ kārya].¹⁵³ The Mallasārul C.P.¹⁵⁴ of Vijayasena refers to the revenue-officers like Audraṅgika (Collector of Udraṅga, tax on permanent tenants or the principal tax)¹⁵⁵ and Hiraṇya-sāmudāyika¹⁵⁶ (collector of taxes in cash). Again, we have specific reference to an officer called Saṣṭhādhikṛta (Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla) who was probably a collector of king's share of one-sixth of the produce.¹⁵⁷ He might be a collector of the sixth part of various articles which

152. Rāmpāl C.P. of Śrīcandra, CBI., P. 225.

153. Bāṅgaḍa C.P. of Mahipāla I, Ibid., P. 203.

154. SI. Vol. I, P. 360.

155. IEG. P. 37, SI. Vol. I, P. 360.

156. IEG. P. 130.

157. Ibid., P. 305.

belonged to the king, according to the Manusmṛti.¹⁵⁸
Customs and tolls, ferry dues and fines for criminal
offences were collected by Vyāpāra-kāraṇḍya (Faridpur C.P.
no. 2 of Dharmāditya) or Śaulkika, Tarika and Dāsāparā-
dhika,¹⁵⁹ who are often referred to in the Pāla epigraphs.

All these taxes were fixed in accordance with the
principles laid down by the Arthaśāstra and the Smṛtiśāstra
that the taxation was to be reasonable and equitable.¹⁶⁰
Whether these principles were followed in practice is
difficult to ascertain. In view of the fiscal right conferred
on religious beneficiaries, who received land-donations from
the state or private individuals, it is not unreasonable to
hold that the peasants under these landed intermediaries
might have suffered under the burden of taxation. However,
the state had to frame the revenue-policy, keeping in view
the entire administration. Although the policy of levying
an increasing number of taxes was deemed to be unjust
apparently, it was unavoidable for the sustenance of the
society, as Manu states. Because, revenue collected in the

158. HAB., P. 314.

159. For different interpretation of the term daśāparādha
cf. U.N.Ghosal, Contributions to the History of Hindu
Revenue System, Calcutta, 1929, PP. 219-20.

160. A.S. Altekar, op. cit., PP. 265-66.

state-treasury was later spent away for the good of the society. Kauṭilya states that in times of natural calamities, the state would provide relief measures to the citizen from its own fund.¹⁶¹ The Mahāsthān Stone Plaque Inscr.¹⁶² (3rd century B.C.) bears testimony to this fact. It records the distribution of mustard grain from state-granary and gaṇḍaka coins as relief measures to the Samvaṅgiyas by Mahāmātra of Puṇḍravardhana. As it has been attested by epigraphic records, the bulk of the expenditure the state had to incur for the proper maintenance of the administrative machinery was devised for the protection and welfare of the society. Kauṭilya emphasises that the strength of the state rests on the force or Bala which in its turn, is maintained by the kośa or finance [Kośamūlo hi daṇḍaḥ].¹⁶³ Again, the power of the state rests on its finance with which it mobilises its different agencies to fulfil its objective of bringing relief and happiness to the society. Increase of wealth belonging to the people meant larger amount of revenue to be deposited in the state-treasury. Again, an

161. AŚ. Vol. II, BK. IV. 3, P. 4.

162. CBI, P. 39.

163. AŚ. Vol. II, BK. VIII. 1, P. 84.

enrichment of the state-treasury would promote agriculture, industry and trade leading to the better economic condition in the country.

Social order :

The Brāhmanical social order found deep root in Puṇḍravāḍhanabhukti during the rule of the Guptas who were zealous patrons of Brāhminism. The state-policy of extending liberal donation of land to the Brahmins and thus, paving the way towards consolidation of a social order enjoined by the Brahmanical texts, was initiated in the Gupta period but continued in the Post-Gupta and Pāla-Sena period. In spite of their predilection for Buddhism, the Pāla-Candra rulers of Bengal upheld the theory of Cāturvarṇya social order. The Pāla epigraphs reveal that the Pāla rulers were anxious to maintain the Cāturvarṇya system by engaging different castes in their respective duties [sāstrārthabhājā calatonuśāsyā varṇān pratiṣṭhāpayatā svadharme Śrī Dharma-
pālena, Monghyr C.P. of Devapāla,.... Nayapālo narapatih....
cāturvarṇyasamāśrayaḥ ... Mānāhali C.P. of Madanapāla].¹⁶⁴

It may be explained by the fact that the Varnasamkara or admixture of castes gradually undermined the ideal of the cāturvarṇya system, and, as a result, followed the social

disorder disturbing the schedule of duties as enjoined by the law-givers for primitive castes of the society. It appears that by the date of the Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa (14th century A.D.), a large number of mixed castes sprang out of anuloma or pratiloma marriage, between traditional castes themselves or, between traditional castes and mixed castes. It would not be unreasonable to assume that the process of admixture of castes had its beginning centuries earlier than the date of the Purāṇas, that is, when the Pālas ruled in Bengal. The social order was in transition and it was quite reasonable for the rulers to attempt to maintain status-quo ante. In maintaining the system of Cāturvarṇya, the rulers of Bengal upheld the interests of the Brahmins with whose advice they had built up the body-politic. The Varṇāśrama theory, it is alleged, was the machination of the Brahmin law-givers to safeguard their own interests and those of the ruling class. Manu clearly states that the Kṣatriyas cannot prosper without the Brāhmaṇas, but, being closely united, they prosper in this world and the next ∫ Nābrahma kṣatramṛdhnōti nāksatram brahma vardhate Brahma kṣatrañca sampr̥ktamiha cāmutra varddhate^{7.165} Thus the Dharmaśāstras advocate the necessity of and entente cordiale between the

two upper castes^{and} for maintaining their privileges. It lay in the logic of the system that the state or, its representative the king, should attempt to force the two lower castes, Vaiśyas and Śūdras, to remain confined within the frame-work of their occupation-schedule [/Vaiśyaśūdrau prayatnena svāmī-karmāṇi kārayet | Tau hi cyutau svakarmabhyah kṣobhayetāmidaṁ jagat_].¹⁶⁶ In fact, it was realised that in case the Vaiśyas and the Śūdras deviated from their occupations, the system of economic production and distribution, serving as the foundation of the traditional social order, would be jeopardised, and the disorder following it would, in its turn, adversely affect the interests of the privileged class comprising the priestly and ruling castes. As it has been stated before, the wealthy members belonging to the Vaiśya community occasionally enjoyed state-patronage, as they used to contribute to the state-treasury in times of emergency. But, whenever they failed to maintain the supply, as it is known from the Vallālacarita, the king would not mind taking such a drastic step as to reduce their position in the society. Although the state originated with the purpose of implementing law in the interest of all classes of people, in course of time, it proved to be a machinery to serve the interests of the ruling and intellectual classes.

166. Ibid. VIII. 418.

Character of the state in Bengal.

The state in ancient Bengal seems to have represented a model of a "welfare-state" as conceived in the Arthaśāstra-Smṛti school of thought. The ideal of the state was, no doubt, to promote dharma, artha and kāma, defend the community against the aggression from without and disorder within, and coordinate and support social agencies through which the individual realised his ^{di}individual and group purposes.¹⁶⁷ The King, representing the state, was entrusted with the task of discharging his duties enjoined in Rāja-dharma, that is, legitimate use of daṇḍa or coercive power. He was under an obligation to protect his subjects, for which he was entitled to receive his share, one-sixth of the produce. Although he was authorised to exercise coercive power, his authority was limited by the sacred law enunciated in the Vedas and further interpreted in the Dharmaśāstras and the Arthaśāstra. As stated by Kauṭilya, the king who employs unlimited coercive power becomes the source of tyranny to the people. Again, it is said, if he exercises less power, he might be defeated and, if he seldom exercises his power, it amounts to anarchy, mātsyanyāya [Tikṣṇadaṇḍo hi bhūtānā-
mudvejanīyaḥ, Mr̥dudaṇḍaḥ paribhūyate ,... apraṇīto hi
mātsyanyā-yamudbhāvayati].¹⁶⁸ When daṇḍa or coercive power

167. Charles Drekmeier, op. cit., P. 269.

168. AS. Vol. I, BK. I. 4, P. 5.

is exercised legitimately, Kauṭilya says, it achieves for the subjects the three goals of dharma, artha and kāma [Subijñātapraṇīto hi daṇḍaḥ prajā dharmārthakāma-
ryojayati_7.¹⁶⁹ When we examine the functioning of the Revenue and Military administration in Bengal, the king appears to be a despot. But, as we keep in our view the works of public good performed by him through different departments, his position seems to be comparable to that of a benevolent or enlightened despot. In any case, without the king, we can hardly think of the social order, because, the king was the head not only, of the state, but also of the society.

169. Ibid.

Appendix - IV

Official titles and designations known from Bengal
epigraphs

Abhitvaramāṇa/Abhitvaramāṇaka (letter-carrier or a special kind of messenger) : Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla, Monghyr C.P. of Devapāla, Bhāgalpur C.P. of Nārāyaṇapāla, Bāṅgaḍa C.P. of Mahīpāla I.

Ābhyantarika (Probably an official of the harem) : Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa.

Āgrahārika (Supervisor of the land or village gifted to Brāhmanas for their subsistence or settlement therein) : Mallasārul C.P. of Vijayasena.

Amātya (high official) : Monghyr C.P. of Devapāla.

Āṅgīkaraṇika (Probably officer for administering oaths) : Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa.

Antaḥpratīhāra (Probably guard of the harem) : Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa.

Antaraṅga (a courtier friendly to the king) : Belāva C.P. of Bhojavarman, Naihāṭi C.P. of Vallālasena.

Audraṅgika (Collector of Udraṅga which is probably a tax on permanent tenants) : Mallasārul C.P. of Vijayasena.

Aurnasthānika (Probably Officer-in-charge of a wool-factory) : Mallasārul C.P. of Vijayasena.

Authitāsānika (Officer-in-charge of arranging seats) : Rāmgaṅj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa.

Āvasathika (Superintendent of avasathas, i.e. colleges, dharmaśālās etc., or Supervisor of the royal palace and other government buildings, or one who keeps the domestic fire burning with daily offerings) : Mallasārul C.P. of Vijayasena.

Āyuktaka (often the governor of a district or subdivision) : Pāhārpur C.P. of G.E. 159.

Balādhyakṣa/Mahābalādhikaraṇika/Mahābalakoṣṭhika (a) officer-in-charge of infantry, (b) army-chief, (c) according to some authorities, Balādhyakṣa was in charge of ten senāpatīs : Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla, Rāmgaṅj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa.

Bhaṭa/Bhaṭṭa (constable, Pāik or Piādā) : Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla, Bhāgalpur C.P. of Nārāyaṇapāla, Paśchimbhāg

C.P. of Śrīcandra, Naihāṭi C.P. of Vallālasena.

Bhogapati/Mahā-bhogapati/Mahābhogika (an Ināmdār or Jāgirdār, or an officer-in-charge of inām lands or jāgirs, or the officer-in-charge of a territorial unit called bhoga; according to Kielhorn, lord of bhukti or province; according to R.C. Majumdar, collector of a tax called 'bhoga') : Mallasārul C.P. of Vijayasena, Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla, Belāva C.P. of Bhojavarman, Naihāṭi C.P. of Vallālasena, Rāmganj C.P. of Īśavaraghoṣa.

Bhuktipati (Head of a bhukti or province) : Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa.

Bṛhaduparika (Provincial Governor used in the sense of a superior officer i.e. one placed at the top) : Belāva C.P. of Bhojavarman, Naihāṭi C.P. of Vallālasena.

Cāṭa/Caṭṭa (constable i.e. Pāik or Piādā) : Nālandā C.P. of Dharmapāla, Rāmpāl C.P. of Śrīcandra, Belāva C.P. of Bhojavarman.

Cauroddharanika ((a) an officer-in-charge of the recovery of stolen property, (b) police officer, (c) officer who imposes fines on thieves) : Mallasārul C.P. of Gopacandra, Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla, Bāngaḍa C.P. of Mahīpāla I,

Paśchimbhāg C.P. of Śrīcandra, Belāva C.P. of Bhojavarman,
Govindapur C.P. of Lakṣmaṇasena, Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa etc.

Daṇḍanāyaka/Mahādaṇḍanāyaka/Daṇḍapāla / (a) probably a Judge/
Chief Judge; (b) Commander of forces, an army officer;
(c) the Commander of forces and officer-in-charge of adminis-
tration / : Nālandā C.P. of Dharmapāla, Mānāhali C.P. of
Madanapāla, Paśchimbhāg C.P. of Śrīcandra, Mādhāinagar C.P.
of Lakṣmaṇasena, Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa.

Daṇḍapānika (literally 'one who holds the rod', probably it
means an officer entrusted with criminal justice or 'a kind
of police officer') : Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa.

Dāṇḍapāsika (a policeman or a smaller police officer or an
official who was probably the leader of a group of Dāṇḍikas;
officer in charge of punishment i.e. criminal justice) :
Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla, Monghyr C.P. of Devapāla,
Bhāgalpur C.P. of Nārāyaṇapāla, Rāmpāl C.P. of Śrīcandra,
Belāva C.P. of Bhojavarman, Barrackpore C.P. of Vijayasena;
Madanpādā Grant of Viśvarūpasena etc.

Dāṇḍasakti (apparently the Dāṇḍika of later epigraphs and
may have been a sort of Police-magistrate) : Khalimpur C.P.
Inscr. of Dharmapāla.

Dāṇḍika [(a) Police-officer; (b) probably head of a group or outpost of the Dāṇḍapāsika] : Nālandā C.P. of Dharmapāla, Monghyr C.P. of Devapāla, Bhāgalpur C.P. of Nārāyaṇapāla, Bāṅgaḍa C.P. of Mahīpāla I.

Dāsāgrāmika (Head of ten villages) : Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla.

Dāsāparādhika [(a) a Judge dealing with ten offences, viz. theft, murder of women, adultery, use of abusive language, violation of order, mixing of castes, illegal pregnancy, obscenity, assault and abortion, (b) an officer who collected fines for ten specified kinds of criminal offences] : Nālandā C.P. of Dharmapāla, Bhāgalpur C.P. of Nārāyaṇapāla, Belwā C.P. of Mahīpāla I, Belwā C.P. Vighrapāla III.

Dauḥsādhāsāadhanika/Dauḥsāadhanika/Dauḥsādhika/Mahādauḥsādhāsāadhanika [(a) officer who catches dangerous robbers whom it is difficult to secure; (b) Head of police department] : Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla, Monghyr C.P. of Devapāla, Bāṅgaḍa C.P. of Bhojavarman, Naihāṭī C.P. of Vallālasena, Ānuliā C.P. of Lakṣmaṇasena, Madanpāḍā C.P. of Viśvarūpasena, Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa.

Devadronīśambaddha (officer entrusted with devadronī, i.e. temple property or temples and sacred tanks) : Mallasārul C.P. of Vijayasena.

Dūta/Dūtaka [(a) 'a messenger' or an agent of delegate of the king; (b) technical title of an officer connected with royal charters, whose duty was to carry the king's order to the local officials by whom the charter was then drawn up and delivered; Dūtaka seems to have been responsible for putting the document and also perhaps the gift-land in donee's possession] : Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla, Monghyr C.P. of Devapāla, Bhāgalpur C.P. of Nārāyaṇapāla, Barrackpore C.P. of Vijayasena, Tarpandighi C.P. of Lakṣmaṇasena.

Dūta-praiṣaṇika (one who sends out a messenger) : Nālandā C.P.s of Dharmapāla and Devapāla, Bhāgalpur C.P. of Nārāyaṇapāla, Mānāhali C.P. of Madanapāla, Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa.

Ekaśaraka (Ekasaraka) (an officer expert in throwing weapons like arrows) : Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa.

Gaṁāgamika/Samāgamika [(a) probably an officer-in-charge of regulating the people's entrance and departure into cities; (b) a kind of messenger) : Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla, Nālandā C.P. of Dharmapāla, Monghyr C.P. of Devapāla, Belwā C.P. of Mahīpāla, Mānāhali C.P. of Madanapāla.

Gaulmika [(a) Officer-in-charge of a gulma or outpost or group of guards, soldiers or policemen; (b) 'Superintendent

of woods and forests', according to Fleet (CII, III, 50);

(c) a custom receiver on highways_7 : Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla, Nālandā C.P. of Devapāla, Bhāgalpur C.P. of Nārāyaṇapāla, Rāmpāl C.P. of Śrīcandra, Belāva C.P. of Bhojavarman, Barrackpore C.P. of Vallālasena, Mādhāinagar C. P. of Lakṣmaṇasena, Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa.

Grāmapati/Grāmika (Headman of a village) : Dāmodarpur C.P.

(no.3) of Budhagupta, Monghyr C.P. of Devapāla, Bāngaḍa C.P. of Mahīpāla I, Jājilpādā C.P. of Gopāla II.

Hastyaśvoṣṭranauvalavyāpṛtaka (officers connected with elephantry, cavalry, navy etc.) : Nālandā C.P.s of Dharmapāla and Devapāla, Bāngaḍa C.P. of Mahīpāla, Rāmpāl C.P. of Śrīcandra.

Haṭṭapati (Supervisor of markets) : Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa.

Hiraṇyasāmudāyika (Collector of taxes paid in cash) : Mallasārul C.P. of Gopacandra.

Jyeṣṭha-Kāyastha/Kāyastha/Prathama-kāyastha (chief scribe) :

Dāmodarpur C.P.s of the Gupta period, Kailān C.P. of Śrīdhāra-ṇarāta, Nīdhānpur C.P. (no.7) of Bhāskaravarman, Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla, Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa.

Karmakara [(a) Officer-in-charge of labour; (b) artisan] :
Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa.

Kārtākṛttika/Mahākārttākṛtika (probably an officer who
reported to the king about the progress of important under-
takings) : Mallasārul C.P. of Gopacandra, Monghyr C.P. of
Devapāla, Bhāgalpur C.P. of Nārāyaṇapāla.

Khādgi/Khadgagrāha (swordsmen, bodyguard) : Mallasārul C.P.
of Gopacandra, Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa.

Khaṇḍarakṣa/Khaṇḍapāla [(a) Customs-Inspector or Superintendent
of police; (b) Khaṇḍapāla has been translated as Superintendent
of repairs] : Monghyr C.P. of Devapāla, Bhāgalpur C.P. of
Nārāyaṇapāla, Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa.

Khola [(a) spy; (b) probably a kind of messenger] : Khalim-
pur C.P. of Dharmapāla, Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa.

Kiśoravaḍapāgomahiṣājāvikādhyakṣa (officer in charge of royal
cattle) : Nālandā C.P. of Dharmapāla, Monghyr C.P. of Devapāla,
Bāngaḍa C.P. of Mahīpāla.

Koṭṭapāla/Koṭṭapati (Officer in charge of forts) : Nālandā
C.P. of Devapāla, Bhāgalpur C.P. of Nārāyaṇapāla, Mānāhali C.P.
of Madanapāla, Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa, Paśchimbhāg C.P. of
Śrīcandra.

Kṣetrapa/Kṣetrapāla (probably an officer-in-charge of lands under cultivation) : Nālandā C.P.s of Dharmapāla and Devapāla, Bāṅgaḍa C.P. of Mahīpāla I, Jājilpādā C.P. of Gopāla II.

Kumārāmātya/Mahākumārāmātya [(a) District officer; (b) one who has hereditary right to a high office of State; (c) a counsellor of the crownprince] : Dāmodarpur C.P.s of the Gupta period, Nālandā C.P. of Dharmapāla, Bhāgalpur C.P. of Nārāyaṇapāla, Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa.

Lekhaka (Scribe) : Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa.

Mahādharmādhyakṣa (Chief Justice) : Belāva C.P. of Bhojavarman, Naihāṭi C.P. of Vallālasena, Tarpandighi C.P. of Lakṣmaṇasena, Edilpur C.P. of Keśavasena.

Mahāgaṇastha [(a) probably military Officer in charge of a body of troops consisting of 27 chariots, as many elephants, 81 horses and 135 foot; (b) Head of a village or town corporation; (c) Chairman of a guild or Superintendent of guilds] : Belāva C.P. of Bhojavarman, Barrackpore C.P. of Vijayasena, Ānuliā C.P. of Lakṣmaṇasena.

Mahā-Karaṇādhyakṣa [(a) Chief of the secretariat; (b) officer-in-charge of the department of records] : Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa.

Mahākataka (Mahākataka ?) (Officer in charge of a military camp) : Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa.

Mahākṣapatalika (the chief Accountant) : Bhāgalpur C.P. of Nārāyaṇapāla, Bāngaḍa C.P. of Mahīpāla, Paśchimbhāg C.P. of Śrīcandra, Belāva C.P. of Bhojavarman, Naihāṭi C.P. of Vallālasena, Mādhāinagar C.P. of Lakṣmaṇasena.

Mahākumārāmātya (Higher class of Kumārāmātya) : Monghyr C.P. of Devapāla, Bhāgalpur C.P. of Nārāyaṇapāla, Bāngaḍa C.P. of Mahīpāla.

Mahāmahattaka (Head of a group of villages or of village council) : Edilpur C.P. of Keśavasena, Madanapādā C.P. of Viśvarūpasena, Chittagong C.P. of Dāmodaradeva.

Mahāmāṇḍalika/Māṇḍalika/Māṇḍalapati / (a) a vassal chief ruling over a maṇḍala; (b) provincial Governor / : Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa.

Mahāmantri/Mantri (Chiefminister/Minister i.e. counsellor): Bāngaḍa C.P. of Mahīpāla I.

Mahā-mudrādhikṛta / (a) Keeper of the Royal seal; (b) Superintendent of Passports / : Belāva C.P. of Bhojavarman, Maināmati

C.P. of Laḍahacandra, Barrackpore C.P. of Vijayasena,
Govindapur C.P. of Lakṣmaṇasena, Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvarachōṣa.

Mahāpādamūlika (King's chief Attendant) : Rāmganj C.P. of
Īśvaraghoṣa.

Mahā-pīlūpati (probably the great Superintendent of elephants
or chief of the elephant-corps) : Guṇaighar C.P. of Vainya-
gupta, Belāva C.P. of Bhojavarman, Barrackpore C.P. Vijayasena,
Mādhāinagar C.P. of Lakṣmaṇasena.

Mahāpratīhāra [(a) probably Superintendent of troops in
charge of the defence of the gates of the palace and capital
and probably also of the king's body-guards; (b) the superior
officer above all door-keepers the great chamberlain] :
Guṇaighar C.P. of Vainyagupta, Nālandā C.P. of Dharmapāla,
Monghyr C.P. of Devapāla, Mānāhali C.P. of Madanapāla, Rāmpāl
C.P. of Śrīcandra, Belāva C.P. of Bhojavarman, Rāmganj C.P. of
Īśvaraghoṣa, Naihāṭi C.P. of Vallālasena, Govindapur C.P. of
Lakṣmaṇasena.

Mahā-purohita (Chief Priest) : Govindapur C.P. of Lakṣmaṇasena,
Edilpur C.P. of Keśavasena, Madhyapādā C.P. of Viśvarūpasena.

Mahārāja (title assumed by feudatories and provincial governors) :
Dāmodarpur C.P. (no.3) of Budhagupta.

Mahāsāmanta/Sāmanta (title of feudatory ruler) : Nālandā C.P. of Dharmapāla, Belwā C.P. of Vighrahapāla III, Mānāñjali C.P. of Madanapāla, Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa.

Mahāsāndhivigrahika/Sāndhivigrahi (High Minister for peace and war) : Bhāgalpur C.P. of Nārāyaṇapāla, Bāṅgaḍa C.P. of Mahīpāla I, Paśchimbhāg C.P. of Śrīcandra, Belāva C.P. of Bhojavarman, Bhuvaneśvar Prasasti of Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva, Barrackpore C.P. of Vijayasena, Mādhāinagar C.P. of Lakṣmaṇasena.

Mahāsarvādhikṛta (literally 'Superintendent of all works', administrator) : Maināmati C.P. of Laḍahacandra, Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa.

Mahāsenapati/Senāpati (Commander-in-chief) : Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla, Bhāgalpur C.P. of Nārāyaṇapāla, Belwā C.P. of Mahīpāla I, Rāmpāl C.P. of Śrīcandra, Belāva C.P. of Bhojavarman, Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa, Naihāṭi C.P. of Vallālasena, Tarpandighi C.P. of Lakṣmaṇasena, Madanapādā C.P. of Viśvarūpasena.

Mahātantrādhikṛta (probably the High priest in charge of religious rites) : Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa.

Mahāvvyūhapati [(a) Military officer-in-charge of battle-arrays; (b) a General] : Rāmpāl C.P. of Śrīcandra, Belāva C.P.

of Bhojavarman, Barrackpore C.P. of Vijayasena, Rāmganj C.P.
of Īśvaraghoṣa.

Nākādhyakṣa/Nāvādhyakṣa [(a) Superintendent of ships; (b) Admiral
in charge of Royal fleet] : Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla.

Naubalahastyaśvagomahiṣājāvikādivyāpṛtaka (Officer-in-charge of
Navy and Superintendents of the Royal cattle) : Paśchimbhāg
C.P. of Śrīcandra, Belāva C.P. of Bhojavarman, Naihāṭi C.P. of
Vallālasena, Mādhāinagar C.P. of Lakṣmaṇasena, Madanpādā C.P.
of Viśvarūpasena.

Nyāyakaraṇika (One responsible for settling disputes regarding the
gift land) : Nidhānpur C.P. (no.7) of Bhāskaravarman.

Pañcādhikaraṇoparika (Head of five administrative offices,) :
Gunaighar C.P. of Vainyagupta.

Pāṇiyāgārika [(a) Superintendent of rest houses; (b) One who
is in charge of the water chamber] : Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa.

Pattalaka (Probably an officer-in-charge of a territorial unit
called pattala) : Mallasārul C.P. of Vijayasena.

Pātyuparika (Probably the head of the department of Accounts, the word pāṭi being known to denote 'Arithmetic') : Gunaighar C.P. of Vainyagupta.

Pīṭhikāvitta (Probably (a) an officer concerned with the arrangement of seats in an assembly or the royal court according to rank and status of their occupiers; (b) those who acquired special seats; (c) Collector of State-dues from pilgrims or religious institutions) : Belāva C.P. of Bhojavarman.

Pramātr / (a) Officer in charge of land-survey; (b) measurer of the king's grain share; (c) a civil Judge / : Nālandā C.P. of Dharmapāla, Monghyr C.P. of Devapāla.

Prāntapāla / (a) Warden of Marches; (b) Governor of a province or guardian of the frontiers / : Nālandā C.P. of Dharmapāla, Bhāgalpur C.P. of Nārāyaṇapāla, Bāṅgaḍa C.P. of Mahīpāla I, Mānāhali C.P. of Madanapāla.

Purohita (Priest) : Irdā C.P. of Kāmboja Nayapāla, Belāva C.P. of Bhojavarman, Naihāṭi C.P. of Vallālasena, Ānuliā C.P. of Lakṣmaṇasena, Tarpandighi C.P. of Lakṣmaṇasena.

Puropāloparika / (a) Probably indicating Governors of cities; (b) Two different dignitaries; viz. Puropāla

(Mayor of a city) and Uparika (Governor) : Gunaighar C.P. of Vainyagupta.

Rājāmātya (a) King's minister; (b) High minister of State; the designation seems to be used to denote certain class of officers serving directly under the king : Nālandā C.P.s of Dharmapāla and Devapāla, Bāngaḍa C.P. of Mahīpāla, Mānāhali C.P. of Madanapāla, Rāmpāl C.P. of Śrīcandra, Belāva C.P. of Bhojavarman, Naihāṭi C.P. of Vallālasena Madanpādā C.P. of Viśvarūpasena.

Rājan ('a chief' or 'a vassal king') : Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla, Bhāgalpur C.P. of Nārāyaṇapāla, Mānāhali C.P. of Madanapāla, Barrackpore C.P. of Vijayasena, Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa.

Rājanyaka (title assumed by feudatories) : Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla, Bhāgalpur C.P. of Nārāyaṇapāla, Belwā C.P. of Mahīpāla I, Mānāhali C.P. of Madanapāla, Belāva C.P. of Bhojavarman, Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa, Barrackpore C.P. of Vallālasena, Ānuliā C.P. of Lakṣmaṇasena, Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa.

Rājapuruṣa (State officer) : Bhāgalpur C.P. of Nārāyaṇapāla, Bāngaḍa C.P. of Mahīpāla I, Rāmpāl C.P. of Śrīcandra.

Rājaputra [(a) title of princes and subordinate rulers;
(b) 'a noble man'] : Nalanda C.P.s of Dharmapāla and
Devapāla, Bāngaḍa C.P. of Mahīpāla I, Paśchimbhāg C.P.
of Śrīcandra, Belāva C.P. of Bhojavarman, Rāmganj C.P.
of Īśvaraghoṣa, Naihāṭi C.P. of Vallālasena, Govindapur C.P.
of Lakṣmaṇasena.

Rājasthānīya (Regent of Viceroy) : Nālandā C.P. of
Dharmapāla, Monghyr C.P. of Devapāla, Bhāgalpur C.P. of
Nārāyaṇapāla, Belwā C.P. of Vīgrahapāla III, Mānāhali C.P.
of Madanapāla.

Rānaka (adesignation of feudatories) : Rāmpāl C.P. of Śrīcandra,
Belāva C.P. of Bhojavarman, Barrackpore C.P. of Vijayasena,
Sunderban C.P. of Lakṣmaṇasena, Madhyapādā C.P. of Viśvarūpasena.

Sādhanika [(a) General; (b) an agent in the court of
justice] : Faridpur C.P. of Dharmāditya, regnal year 3.

Śāntakika (Official designation of uncertain meaning) : Rāmganj
C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa.

Śāntivārika ('the priest in charge of propitiatory rites) :
Rāmpāl C.P. of Śrīcandra.

Śāntyāgārādhikṛta/Śāntyāgārika (the priest-in-charge of the room where propitiatory rites are performed) : Belāva C.P. of Bhojavarman, Mādhāinagar C.P. and Sunderban C.P. of Lakṣmaṇasena.

Śarabhaṅga (A leader of forces, probably headman of native crew attached to artillery, dragging guns etc.) : Nālandā C.P.s of Dharmapāla and Devapāla.

Ṣaṣṭhādhikṛta / (a) Collector of the king's grain share which was originally one-sixth of the produce; (b) Collector of the sixth part of various articles which belonged to the king / : Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla.

Śaulkika (Superintendent of tolls and customs duties) : Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla, Monghyr C.P. of Devapāla, Bāngaḍa C.P. of Mahīpāla, Paśchimbhāg C.P. of Śrīcandra, Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa.

Śaunika (It may be a corrupt form of Śaulkika. Otherwise it probably denotes the Superintendent of slaughter-house) : Mānāhali C.P. of Madanapāla.

Śīrorakṣika (Chief of the royal Body-guards) : Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa.

Tadāyuktaka/Tadāniyukta / (a) probably a class of officers called Āyuktaka i.e. governor of a district or subdivision; (b) subordinates under high officers / : Nālandā C.P. of Dharmapāla, Monghyr C.P. of Devapāla, Bhāgalpur C.P. of Nārāyaṇapāla, Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa.

Tarapati (Supervisor of ferries) : Nālandā and Monghyr C.P.s of Devapāla.

Tarika (Collector of ferry dues) : Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla, Monghyr C.P. of Devapāla, Bhāgalpur C.P. of Nārāyaṇapāla, Mānāhali C.P. of Madanapāla.

Thakkura / (a) Feudatory chieftain; probably Brāhmaṇa by caste / : Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa.

Uparika/Vṛhaduparika (Provincial Governor) : Dāmodarpur C.P.s of Kumāragupta and Budhagupta, Ghugrāhāṭi C.P. of Samācāradeva, Mallasārul C.P. of Vijayasena, Nālandā C.P. of Dharmapāla, Bhāgalpur C.P. of Nārāyaṇapāla, Belwā C.P. of Vighrahapāla, Belāva C.P. of Bhojavarman, Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa.

Vāhanāyaka (Superintendent of transport) : Mallasārul C.P. of Gopacandra.

Vāsāgārika [(a) Officer-in-charge of residential buildings;
(b) Officer in charge of king's bed-chamber] : Rāmganj
C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa.

Viṣayapati (District officer) : Mallasārul C.P. of Gopacandra,
Ghugrāhāṭi C.P. of Samācāradeva, Khalimpur C.P. of Dharma-
pāla, Monghyr C.P. of Devapāla, Bhāgalpur C.P. of Nārāyaṇa-
pāla, Rāmpāl C.P. of Śrīcandra, Belāva C.P. of Bhojavarman,
Naihāṭi C.P. of Vallālasena, Tarpandighi C.P. of Lakṣmaṇa-
sena, Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa.

Vṛddhadhānuṣka (Military officer-in-charge of bowmen) :
Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa.

Vyāpārakāraṇḍya/Vyāpāraṇḍya (Customs officer) : Faridpur
C.P.s of Dharmāditya and Gopacandra.

CHAPTER VII

Caste and Class

An analysis of the social structure may be based on either the caste-system or the class-stratification. The history of the caste-system records the origin and development of traditional castes (Varna and Varnasamkara), their respective position in the society and interrelations with each other. The history of the class-stratification, on the other hand, traces the origin and development of the social classes, keeping in view the economic factors behind, their respective position in the society, their interrelations with each other. While the caste-system presupposes the four-fold division of the society as enunciated by the thinkers of the Arthaśāstra - Dharmaśāstra school, the class-stratification beings with no such presupposition but entirely depends upon the forces of history leading to the gradual transformation of the society and economy. A meeting point between the traditional caste-view of the society and the recent trend of class-analysis may, however, be found out, when the data culled from the epigraphic records are compared and contrasted with those derived from the Purāṇas. .

Definitions of Caste :

The word 'caste' came into use from the Portuguese use of the term 'casta' derived from Latin 'castus' denoting purity of blood.¹ In the sixteenth century, the Portuguese traders in the western coast of India noticed traditional division among the Hindus on the basis of occupations and purity of birth, the upper divisions not coming in contact with the lower ones and the intermarriages and interdining being forbidden among them.²

There is no unanimity among scholars on the definition of 'caste'. Emile Senart defines caste as an exclusive close corporation, rigorously hereditary, binding its members by the practice of common occupation and common customs, relating more particularly to marriage, food and questions of ceremonial pollution. Finally, it is equipped with independent organization including a chief and council which enforces the full authority of the community by the sanction of certain penalties, especially of exclusion of particular member from the group on violation of the caste-rules.³

1. H. Risley, People of India, Delhi, 2nd ed., 1969, P. 67.

2. J.H. Hutton, Caste in India, 4th ed., Oxford University press, Bombay, 1963, P. 47.

3. N.K. Dutt, Origin and Growth of Caste in India, Vol. I, 2nd ed., Calcutta, 1968, P. 1.

According to Risley, "a caste may be defined as a collection of families or groups of families bearing a common name; claiming common descent from a mythical ancestor, human or divine; professing to follow the same hereditary calling; and regarded by those who are competent to give opinion as forming a single homogeneous community".⁴ He further adds that the caste-name is associated with a specific occupation and a caste is almost invariably endogamous in the sense that a member of the large circle denoted by the common name may not marry outside the circle but the circle is further divided into a number of smaller circles, each of which is also endogamous so that a Brahmin is not only restricted to marrying another Brahmin, but to marrying a woman of the same subdivision of Brahmins.⁵ In the opinion of Sir Edward Gait, the caste may be defined "as an endogamous group or collection of such groups bearing a common name, having the same traditional occupation, claiming descent from the same source, and commonly regarded as forming a single homogeneous community".⁶ S.V. Ketkar defines caste as a "social group having two characteristics : (1) membership is confined to

4. Ibid., P. 2.

5. J.H.Hutton, op. cit., P. 47.

6. N.K.Dutt, op. cit. Vol. I, P. 2.

those who are born of members and includes all persons so born, (2) the members are forbidden by an inexorable social law to marry outside the group".⁷ He further adds that each group is identified by a specific name and several such small aggregates are comprehended under a common name, which is again a subdivision of some larger group having independent name. Thus, it appears that there are several stages of groups and the word 'caste' may be applied to any group at any stage. The words 'caste' and 'sub-caste' are, therefore, not absolute but comparative in intended meaning of the term.⁸ The network of various stages of caste-division is clearly visible in the society of Bengal during the early period.

Various occupational castes are grouped into Sat-sūdra, Asat-sūdra and Antyaja castes or Uttama, Madhyama and Adhama saṁkaras as enumerated in Brahmavaivartapurāṇa and Bṛhaddharma-purāṇa respectively. These larger divisions are again sub-divisions of still larger group, namely, Sūdras or non-Brahmins. The Brāhmaṇas are in the same way sub-divided into a number of sub-branches, namely, Rādhīya, Vārendra,

7. S.V. Ketkar, The History of Caste in India, Vol. I, New York, 1911, PP. 15 - 16.

8. J.H.Hutton, op. cit., P. 48.

Vaidika, Śākadvīpī etc. The Brāhmaṇas and Śūdras represent two broad caste-divisions of the whole population of Bengal composed of the Indo-Aryans and pre-Aryan aboriginal tribes of Bengal like the Puṇḍaras, Vaṅgas, Suhmas, Rāḍhas etc.

Max Weber describes caste as a "closed status group" which is generally based on difference in wealth, occupation, and, above all, purity of blood. According to him, a tribe may become a caste by maintaining endogamy and acquiring specific occupational traditions of handicrafts or other arts.⁹ Social anthropologists define caste as an endogamous hereditary subdivision in society, ranked in a superordinate and subordinate order to other such subdivisions. This definition fully conforms to the elaborate caste-structure in Bengal given in the Smṛtis and Purāṇas.

Nesfield and Ibbetson emphasise on occupational theory of caste-system. According to Nesfield, function was the only basis of caste-system in India. Ibbetson, however, recognised the segmental, exclusive, immobile and hierarchical nature of caste which was based not only upon occupational

9. cf. Jyotirmoyee Sarma, Caste Dynamics among the Bengali Hindus, Calcutta, 1980, pp. 36 - 37.

but also political or social differences.¹⁰ G.S.Ghurye finds the following features of a caste-society in India : (1) segmental division of society, (2) hierarchy, (3) restrictions on feeding and social intercourse, (4) civil and religious disabilities and privileges of the different sections, (5) lack of choice of occupation and (6) restrictions on marriage.¹¹

Taking into consideration the above definitions, we may trace the following features of the caste-system in Bengal : (1) endogamy (2) restrictions on inter-dining and intermarriage (3) specific occupations for different castes, (4) hierarchical gradation of castes, the most recognised position being that of the Brahmins at the top; (5) birth alone decides a man's connection with his caste for life, unless he be expelled from caste for violating his caste-rules, otherwise, caste-mobility is not possible, (6) the whole system is centred round the prestige and interest of the Brahmins.¹²

10. Ibid., PP. 38 - 39.

11. G.S.Ghurye, Caste and Race in India, Bombay, 1979, PP. 2 - 18.

12. N.K.Dutt, op. cit., Vol. I, P. 3; J.H.Hutton, op. cit., P. 49.

Confusion seems to have arisen out of an indiscriminate use of the term 'caste' as the synonym of both varṇa and jāti, the former representing the fourfold division of the society and the latter representing the smaller occupational groups existing in society which, according to the authors of Dharmaśāstras, derive their origin from union between male and female of any two of the four varṇas. The Cāturvarṇya system only manifests functional divisions of the whole society. The Dharmaśāstras seek to rationalise hierarchical divisions of mankind on functional basis. But the functional division did not necessarily imply hereditary caste-group formation. Various elements like heredity, endogamy, taboo etc, which contributed to the framework of complex caste-system at a later period, did not exist in the Vedic society. In view of complexities of social relationships that the word "caste" tends to imply, it is desirable to use the term as the synonym of the social formation known as jāti rather than varṇa.

Racial differences between the Indo-Aryans and the pre-Aryans have been cited by many authorities as the springhead of Indian social divisions. When the white-skinned sharp-nosed Nordics, popularly known as Aryans, penetrated into India, they were anxious to keep their blood free

from contamination with that of the aborigines of the country. The very reference to Āryavarṇa and Dāsavarṇa in the Ṛgveda indicates the racial difference. That the colour-question was at the root of the varṇa-system is apparent from the meaning of the word varṇa (complexion). When the Aryans poured into Bengal, they maintained this exclusiveness. Bengal was Aryanised at a much later period. It appears from epigraphic records that the Brāhmanical culture made its headway in the region during the Gupta period. By the long-stretch of time, there increased fusion of blood between Indo-Aryans and pre-Aryans, and the orthodox Brāhmaṇas, who were propagators of Vedic Brāhmanical social order, were more strictly bent on preserving endogamy and relegated the progeny of mixed origin to lower status. The tradition recorded in the Great Epic and the Purāṇas relating to the birth of five sons named Āṅga, Vaṅga, Kaliṅga, Suhma and Puṇḍra by the union between sage Dīrghatamas and the wife of the Asura king Bali testifies to the intermixture of blood between the white-coloured and dark-coloured races. In this process the aborigines of Bengal were brought into the Aryan fold and were accorded the position of Śūdras. H. Risley observes that the status of a caste stands in inverse ratio with the degree of Aryan physical affinity it has got. With the help of anthropometric method, he took the cephalic index and nasal index of different castes. But, in view of the

existing social gradation of different castes in Bengal, Risley's view based on his anthropometric study can hardly be supported. In accordance with the social position, the rank of the castes, in order of priority, should be arranged thus; Brāhmaṇa, Kāyastha (the clean Śūdra), Kaivarta (the unclean Śūdra) and Caṇḍāla (antyaja or outcaste).¹³ It may be deduced, therefore, that each caste is anthropologically a mixed group and is composed of heterogenous biotypes.

Varnasamkara theory :

The tradition of racial admixture is upheld by the Hindu lawgivers in the scheme of jāti-structure as given in the Dharmaśāstras. According to the Varnasamkara theory, jātis or castes were produced by the union between male and female of any two of the four original varṇas. Manu thus enumerates numerous such jātis each of which has some particular occupation. Besides these mixed castes, Manu mentions a number of degraded castes called Vrātyas who originally belonged to the three upper varṇas but were degraded to the status of Vrātyas due to non-observance of sacred rites. These castes cover a number of ethnic tribes including a number of foreign tribes which poured into India from time to time. Manu's theory seems to be highly fanciful and absurd. Firstly, the theory seeks to derive the origin

13. G.S. Ghurye, op. cit., P. 123; Bhupendranath Datta, Studies in Indian Social Polity, 2nd ed; Calcutta, 1983, P. 94.

of the whole population of the world from the original varṇas. Secondly, castes which were compact tribes like Andhras, Medas, Pukkakas or those which represented different types of occupations are all supposed to have been produced by cross-breeding. Thirdly, there is a great divergence of opinion among the Smṛtikāras regarding the origin of these castes. But the theory of Manu cannot be rejected as absolutely absurd. That the new social groups were produced from intertribal marriages, as suggested by Manu, can still be observed among some of the aborigines of India.¹⁴ On the other hand, inclusion of a number of foreign peoples into the fold of Cāturvarṇya-system hints at the attempt on the part of the Brāhmanical law-givers to absorb foreigners into the Brāhmanical order of the society and determine their position according to their conduct and respect for the Vedic rites. Thus, the degradation of foreign and some indigenous tribes to the status of Vrātyas due to non-observance of sacred rites tends to show that in case of their fuller adoption of the Brāhmanical ceremonials, the stigma would have been removed and they would be given a status equal to that of the three upper varṇas. The alien nations were, thus, imperceptibly tempted to give up their own old practices and conform more and more to the Brāhmanical usages. But the difficulty lies in the fact that Manu

14. N.K.Dutt, op. cit., Vol. I, P. 10.

derives the origin of all the occupational castes by inter-breeding which is quite fanciful. An occupational grouping has got an economic basis which determines the gradation of professional groups in the social hierarchy. Social gradations were originally on the basis of professions, as we find them in the Cāturvarṇya system. In course of time, professions multiplied with the growing needs of the society and new professional groups emerged.

Thus the broad-based division of labour represented by varṇas developed in the jāti-system. Different types of handicrafts, trade in different articles and varieties of services to the community were treated as distinct and specialized occupations, each of which was ascribed to individual jātis. Traditionally, a particular occupation was considered to be the monopoly of a jāti. Thus, hereditary occupation gave rise to endogamous caste-group formation. Different occupational castes mentioned in the Smṛtis undoubtedly represent local variations.

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Caste-system reflected in the Brhaddharma and Brahmaivaivarta Purāṇas :

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The Brhaddharma and Brahmaivaivarta Purāṇas reflect an actual social condition prevalent in ancient Bengal.

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These Purāṇas show two-fold divisions of society, i.e. Brāhmaṇas and Sudras or pure Brāhmaṇas and Mixed-castes (Saṁkara). Both the Purāṇas, following the Smṛti tradition, derive mixed origin of all the occupational castes. The Brhaddharma Purāṇa classifies them into three grades of Saṁkara or mixed castes, while the Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa includes most of them into Sat-śūdra and Asat-śūdra groups and describes the degraded castes as Antyajas or outcastes who remained outside the pale of Brāhmanical culture. It has been shown how the Sat-śūdra of the Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa roughly corresponds to the Uttama-saṁkara group of the Brhaddharmapurāṇa, the Asat-śūdra of the former to the Madhyamasamkara of the latter and the Antyajas of the former to the Adhamasamkara of the latter. It appears that the ranking of a caste depends on whether its occupation represents a higher or lower stage of cultural advancement. Thus, the priestly caste representing the intellectual class is regarded as the highest caste. The agriculturists, metal-workers and traders, who represent the productive professions, are placed in subsequent grades of hierarchy in order of priority of their occupations from the economic point of view. The castes, taking to the primitive occupations like fishing, basket-making, hunting etc., are placed at the lowest rung of the social hierarchy. As it has been pointed out, the degradation of Sūtradhāra (carpenter), Citrakāra (painter),

Svarṇakāra (goldsmith) and Suvarṇavaṇik (bullion merchant) to a lower rank may be explained by less importance attached to their contributions to the economy of the country. It may be derived from Ānandabhaṭṭa's Vallālacarita that the mercantile community, especially the bullion-merchants, were so well-organised through their guilds that they disavowed their allegiance to the king, for which they were denied by the State higher social status they had enjoyed earlier. This might have occurred due to a change in the State's economic policy, a shift of emphasis from trade and commerce to agriculture.

The BṛhaddharmaPurāṇa mentions Gāndhika or Gandhavaṇik (dealer in spices, scent etc.) and Śaṅkhika, i.e. Śaṅkha-vaṇik or Śaṅkhakāra (conch-shell-worker and trader) who probably formed separate guilds of their own distinguished from those of Suvarṇavaṇiks. Artisans like Kāṁsakāra (bell-metal worker), Karmakāra (blacksmith), Svarṇakāra (goldsmith), Mālākāra (florist) and others, enumerated in the aforesaid Purāṇas as well as epigraphic records, seem to have formed their own guilds during the Gupta period.

Guild-theory of caste :

Localisation of trade and industry as well as hereditary nature of occupations gave rise to the well-knit organisations known as Śreṇī or Nigama (Guild). Both the merchant-guilds

and artisan-guilds were influential corporations in the age of the Jātakas and continued to hold their position in the society till late period, as testified to by the evidence of the Smṛtis. The power and prestige of the guilds was based on the accumulated capital in their possession. As they represented the wealthy aristocracy of the society, they refused to accomodate members of the castes following lower crafts or hinasippas. As we come to know from the writings of Nārada and Bṛhaspati, the guilds were empowered with the legislative, judicial and executive functions of their own.¹⁵ The references to Nagaraśreṣṭhī, Sārthavāha and Prathamakulika in the Gupta land-grant charters suggest the prestigious position of the guilds in 5th-6th century Bengal. Nagaraśreṣṭhī seems to have been the chief merchant or President of the city-guilds,¹⁶ Sārthavāha was the chief of the guild of caravan-traders, and Prathamakulika was the chief artisan, apparently of various craft-guilds. During the Post-Gupta period, the trade-guilds seem to have continued with the active participation of pradhānavyāpārīn or pradhānavyavaharīn i.e. chief traders referred to in the Faridpur copper plates¹⁷ of Gopacandra and Samācāradeva. Stray references

15. Bhupendranath Datta, op. cit., P. 113.

16. E.A.H. Blunt, The Caste-system of Northern India, Delhi, 1969, P. 16.

17. CBI., P. 84; EI. XVIII, P. 74.

to Vanik in the Pāla epigraphs bear testimony to the continuity of trade-guilds, although they were hardly accorded any recognition by the State. The existence of the guild of artists in Varendrī is vouchsafed for by the evidence of the Deopārā Praśasti¹⁸ of Vijayasena (cf. Vārendra-kaśilpigoṣṭhī, V. 36). With the gradual development of trade-relations and specialised crafts, the significance and compactness of the guilds deepened, and being similar to the castes, on account of traditional organisation and hereditari-ness of membership, as well as adherence to certain rules and customs with reference to marriage and interdining, they got the character of a real caste till they finally became modern trading and manufacturing castes.¹⁹ This evolution of guild-castes is clearly visible in the enumeration of a number of such trading and artisan-castes in the Bṛhaddharma and Brahmavaivarta Purāṇas.

Tribal castes :

The Purāṇas include a number of low-castes stamped as Antyajās or Adhama-saṁkaras in the lowest stratum of the jāti-structure. Some of these castes like Caṇḍālas, Maḍḍipās,

18. IB., P. 42.

19. Bhupendranath Datta, op. cit., P. 114.

Domas, Bāgatīta, Malegrāhī etc. seem to have derived their origin from the aboriginal tribes. With the expansion of Indo-Aryan culture in Bengal, the tribals in the hills and jungles were gradually exposed to the process of acculturation. The superior technology of production and distribution won over the aborigines, by degrees, to the fold of Brāhmanical society. The process of detribalisation leading to the amalgamation of some dissident groups, belonging to either the Austric or the Dravidian stock, is also to be taken into consideration as one of the factors contributing to the increase in the number of the lower castes in the society. Epigraphic records of Bengal make specific references to such castes as often distinguished by the names of tribes to which they originally belonged.

Sects as castes :

Religious sects were sometimes recognised as castes. The Brahmavaiivarta Purāṇa mentions two sectarian castes, viz. Juṅgī (Asat-sūdra) and Kāpālī (Antyaja). In the epigraphic records of Bengal, however, we hardly find any reference to such sectarian castes. However, the rise of five religious sects, Vaiṣṇava, Śaiva, Śākta, Saura and Gāṇapatya, upholding at the same time the Smārta - Pañcopāsana may be clearly traced in the epigraphic records and literary texts. These sects, in due course of time, turned to be castes following the rules of commensality even among the sub-sections belonging the same religious sect.

Relations between Castes :

Although the castes in Bengal are traditionally numbered thirty six, these increased further in number with the development of new occupations and it would be difficult to trace any hard and fast rule of exclusiveness in either the epigraphic records or the Smṛti texts of Bengal. The Smṛtinivandhas of Bengal reveal that both as regards inter-dining and inter-marriage the restrictions were originally imposed to determine the relations between Brahmins and non-Brahmins or Śūdras. The hierarchical structure did not remain a set pattern throughout the period. The hierarchy seems to have varied with the mobility of castes. The Caṇḍālas represented as antyajas in the Brahmavaivartapurāṇa are distinguished from the antyajas in Bhavadevabhaṭṭa's Prāyaścittaprakaraṇam. The Antyajas in Bhavadeva's view include seven castes, namely, Rajaka, Carmakāra, Naṭa, Vaḍura, Kaivarta, Meda and Bhilla, some of whom rank higher than Caṇḍāla. That there was a basis of social differentiations in prescribing penances for different castes is clearly understood by Bhavadeva's own comment : "It is to be inferred that the penance would be reduced by a quarter and half for a Brāhmaṇa eating the food respectively of a Vaiśya and a Kṣatriya, and a Kṣatriya eating the food respectively of a Śūdra and Vaiśya, and half the penance is prescribed for Vaiśya eating the food of a Śūdra".²⁰ As Bhavadeva cites no earlier authorities for

20. HAB., P. 426.

this comment, it may be assumed that Bhavadeva legalised the practice that gradually developed in Bengal. Bhavadeva again quotes earlier authorities to show that certain kinds of food touched by a Śūdra can be taken by a Brāhmaṇa and any kind of food can be taken from a Śūdra by a Brāhmaṇa in times of emergency. In spite of the general restrictions, however, the Brāhmaṇas were not degraded by taking food from the lower castes and penances provided the solution for even the worst transgression, such as taking food from a Candāla.

Restrictions about intermarriage like those of inter-dining were not strictly followed. Intermarriage between a male of higher caste and a female of lower caste was regarded as valid down to the close of the Hindu period.²¹ The Tipperā C.P.²² of Lokanātha which records that his ancestors both on the father's and mother's sides were Brāhmaṇas. But Lokanātha's grandfather on mother's side, Keśava, is called a Pāraśava. It indicates that his Brāhmaṇa father married a Śūdra lady. Lokanātha himself is referred to as a Karaṇa, signifying his official position but not caste. In view of the Vaiśya-Śūdra origin of the Karaṇa caste, as enjoined in the Smṛtis and Purāṇas, it would be unreasonable to assume that Lokanātha

21. HD., PP. 52ff., 447ff.

22. EI. XV, P. 301ff.

belonged to the Karaṇa caste, since his father was a descendent of a Brahmin family. However, Lokanātha was of mixed origin, as his mother was the daughter of a Pāraśava. The fact that Pāraśava Keśava and Lokanātha held very high position in the administration proves that the marriage of a Brāhmaṇa male with a Śūdra female was not always condemned and their son was not necessarily relegated to a lower status in the society. Quoting Manu (III. 12-13) as his authority, Jīmūtavāhana in his Dāyabhāga²³ sanctions the Anuloma marriage. Again, he refers to the criticism of Manu and Viṣṇu against the union of twice-born with a Śūdra woman.²⁴ Jīmūtavāhana, however, offers a solution, observing that an illicit union of a twice-born with a Śūdra lady is reckoned as a trivial offence, although this type of intermarriage causes degradation of the higher caste. So intermarriage was quite in vogue in the time of Jīmūtavāhana, but the marriage between a Brāhmaṇa male and Śūdra female was not encouraged. The validity of the Anuloma marriage is indicated by the reference to the accomplished Śūdra wife of a Brāhmaṇa in Bhavadevabhaṭṭa's Prāyaścittaprakaraṇam,²⁵ rules of inheritance laid down by Jīmūtavāhana for the Śūdra wife of a Brāhmaṇa and her son

23. Colbrooke's translation, 1858, pp. 159-61.

24. MS. III. 15-17.

25. PRP., P. 90.

as well as the injunctions of Jīmūtavāhana as regards incompetence of a Śūdra wife to assist her Brāhmaṇa husband in religious rites. In course of time, restrictions regarding drinking and intermarriage, originally applicable to the Brāhmaṇas only, gradually extended to the lower castes, and marked lines of demarcation. The caste-structure, as presented in the Purāṇas, clearly recognises distinction between Sat and Asat-Śūdra or between Uttama and Madhyamasamkara the antya jaja or the Adhamasamkara ranking as the lowest order in comparison with other caste-divisions. It may be reasonably held that at least marriage-restrictions were imposed to distinguish one caste-group from the other. Otherwise, the lines of demarcation would never have been maintained. Gradations of different castes in the social hierarchy seem to have gradually generated the concept of aristocratism. It is indeed the growing fiction of Sudra origin of all non-Brahmin castes that was responsible, to a great extent, for the evolution of the final shape of casteism in Bengal.

Kulinism :

The tradition recorded in the Kulaji texts associates the introduction of Kulinism with Vallālasena who, in order to bring about thorough reorganisation of the social order, raised the Brahmins possessed of nine virtues to a higher

social status.²⁶ This kind of social rank led to the formation of the nobility and subdivisions of the same castes, viz. Rādhīya, Vārendra, Vaidika etc. Whether the system of Kulinism was actually introduced by Vallālasena needs an investigation. It is difficult to associate Vallālasena definitely with the system due to lack of adequate evidence at our disposal. Least historical importance may be attached to the Kulaśāstras of late date. But we should pause for a while to consider the socio-religious policy of the Sena rulers who were patrons of Brāhmanism in Bengal. Patronage to Buddhism accorded by the Pāla and Candra rulers seems to have undermined the position of Brāhmanical culture. The Senas, therefore, made an unprecedented endeavour to restore the Brāhmanical social order to its pristine purity. It would not be unreasonable to hold that Vallālasena, a disciple of an illustrious Smṛtikāra like Aniruddhabhaṭṭa and also a composer of Smṛti-works like Dānasāgara and Adbhūtasāgara, attempted to rejuvenate Brāhmanical social order by the introduction of Kulinism. Halāyūdhā in his Brāhmaṇasarvasva

26. HAB., P. 47; Vide N. Kundu, Castes and classes in Pre-Muslim Bengal, London University Thesis (unpublished), 1963, P. 174.

cf. Ācāra - vinaya - vidyā - pratiṣṭhā - tīrthadarsanam
Niṣṭhā - vṛttistapodānam navadhā kulalakṣaṇam ॥

has referred to the degenerating condition of the Vedic study in Bengal and prescribed remedy for the restoration of Vedic Brāhmanical religion. If this be the social background, Vallālasena's attempt at social reformation can hardly be questioned.

Again, epigraphic records of Bengal dated from the 5th century onwards indicate a trend of making liberal donation of lands to those Brāhmaṇas who had proficiency in the Vedas and regularly performed the Vedic rites. It appears that rights and privileges, socio-economic and political, were extended to the distinguished Brahmins and thus was formed the nobility under State-patronage. The policy of extending State-patronage to the Brahmin nobility continued till the end of the early period, most probably to safeguard the Brāhmanical social order in the face of its slackening condition. Kulinism was nothing more than a mark of nobility.

In course of time, the rank of nobility was accorded to the castes other than Brahmins. That the officials designated Kāyastha or Karaṇa-Kāyastha held important position in the administration is evident from the epigraphs of Bengal.²⁷ It appears that the official designation gradually

27. cf. Prathama - Kāyastha, Dāmodarpur C.P. s of the Gupta period, EI. XV, PP. 130 - 142.

turned to be a caste-designation of those who, being highly placed in the royal service for a long time, came to be regarded as one of the top-ranking classes in the society. As suggested by Dr. Niharranjan Ray,²⁸ the messenger Śālāḍḍanāga under Vijayasena,²⁹ Sāndhivigrahika (Minister in charge of peace and war) Harighoṣa under Vallālasena,³⁰ Mahāsāndhivigrahika Nārāyaṇadatta under Lakṣmaṇasena,³¹ Sāndhivigrahika Nānīsimha and Kopiviṣṇu under Viśvarūpasena³² as well as Umāpaṭidhara, the court poet of Vijayasena seem to have belonged to Karaṇa-Kāyastha caste. Dr. Ray, of course, derives the Kāyastha origin of the nobles, referred to above, from their name-endings, later known as surnames.

High official position or even royal power was also attained by some other non-Brahmin castes. In the Bhāṭerā C.P.³³ of Īśānadeva, his minister Paṭṭanika Banamālikara is described as "the light of the Vaidya family" (Vaidyavaṁśa-pradīpa). It is evident from Sandhyākarandin's Rāmacaritam

28. BI. P. 307.

29. Barrackpore C.P. of Vijayasena, IB., P. 64.

30. Naiḥāṭi C.P. of Vallālasena, Ibid., P. 75.

31. Govindapur C.P. of Lakṣmaṇasena, Ibid., P. 97.

32. Calcutta Sāhitya Pariṣat C.P. of Viśvarūpasena, CBI., P. 326, Madanpāḍā C.P. of Viśvarūpasena, Ibid., P. 318.

33. CPS., P. 188.

that the Kaivarta chief Divya occupied Varendrī after the death of Mahīpāla (II) in his attempt to put down rebellious vassal chiefs.³⁴ From the Rāmacaritam, it appears that Divya had been a high official under Mahīpāla II.³⁵ Divya was followed by Rudoka, his younger brother and Rudoka's son Bhīma. It appears from the occupation of the throne of Varendrī by the three members of the Kaivarta line and the description in the Rāmacaritam of the riches and strength of Bhīma's kingdom that the Kaivarta rulers,³⁶ in spite of their lower caste, achieved an unprecedented premier position in the society. If the line would have continued for a long time, the court-poet, might have devised their origin either from the solar or lunar race of epic fame, as it was done in case of early medieval ruling dynasties.

The process of the mobility of castes suggests that the claim to the position of the nobility could hardly have been monopolised by a caste through the ages. We have already shown in the light of the Vallālacarita how Vallālasena, an exponent of Kulinism, reduced the Svarṇavanīks to a lower status in the society.

34. RC. I. 29.

35. Ibid., I. 38.

36. Ibid., II. 21-27.

Social stratification : classes.

Epigraphic records of Bengal bear clear testimony to the existence of classes rather than of castes. The classes may be traced in both rural and urban societies. The rural classes are referred to in the expression Brāhmaṇottarān Mahottamottamakūṭumbipurogamedāndhra caṇḍāla-paryantān,³⁷ referring to the priestly class, the land-owning class and the classes belonging to the lower order in the society. The priestly class, being endowed with revenue-free land-grants, formed a large section of the landed aristocracy. Other grades of land-owning classes are represented by Mahāmahottama, Mahattama, Mahattara, Kuṭumbin etc. The occupational groups like potters, blacksmiths, oil-pressers, weavers, washermen and barbers, who catered to the daily needs of the rural society, seem to have been covered by the above expression, as it includes even the lowliest of the social groups like the Medas, Andhras and Caṇḍālas belonging to the menial class. The peasantry (karṣakas or kṣetrakaras) find separate mention as an important class accommodating a very large section of the rural population. Peasantry comprised different grades of cultivators, viz. those who possessed lands of their own, those who were share-croppers and those who were

37. Bhāgalpur C.P. of Nārāyaṇapāla, CBI., P. 168.

landless cultivators. It appears that the land-owning peasants or peasant-proprietors are referred to as Kuṭumbins, as it is suggested by the evidence of the Jātakas.

The urban areas were mainly inhabited by comparatively richer people. As it is evident from the epigraphic records, the urban society comprised the ruling class, the priestly or intellectual class, the mercantile class and the artisan class. To cater to their needs and luxuries, service-and menial classes as well as occupational groups like dancers, musicians, actors, acrobats and bufoons lived in towns.

Class and Caste :

At the initial stage of social evolution in India, there came into existence four functional classes namely, priestly or intellectual class, ruling class, mercantile-cum-land-owning class and artisan-cum-cultivator class. The Brāhmanas, who formed the priestly class, were the repository of sacred knowledge and experts in Vedic rites and rituals. Their occupation was to perform sacrifices for others and to impart teaching in the Vedas. The Kṣatriyas, representing ruling-cum-military class, were invested with administrative and military powers and functions. The Vaiśyas

were land-owning agriculturists, traders and merchants. The Sudras constituted the serving class and the artisan class practising various arts and crafts. As it has been already pointed out, there was, of course, a tendency to resolve the varna divisions into a hierarchy in order of precedence of the professions adopted by them. Classes were thus expressive of the social status that was determined by occupational superiority. "A social class, then is any portion of a community marked off from the rest by social status", and the system of social classes involves a hierarchy of status-groups, the recognition of the superior-inferior stratification and some degree of permanency of structure.³⁸

From the dialectical materialistic point of view, there were, at all stages of history, two classes, the producing class and the class controlling the means of production and also the process of distribution. Those who believe in the theory of economic determinism follow a dichotomy in class-stratification, the exploiter and the exploited, or the privileged and the non-privileged.³⁹ This dichotomy may be traced in Bengal, when we consider the relations between the landowners and the landless cultivators, or, between the

38. R. M. Maciver and Charles H. Page, Society: An Introductory Analysis, Madras, 1979, P. 348-349.

39. International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences, Vols. 15, 16, 17, Ed. by David L. Sills, New York, 1972.

merchants or traders and small craftsmen. It can hardly be assumed, however, that the Śūdras representing the servile class were forced to suffer from exploitation through the ages because, the mobility of castes and classes characterised the changes in the social set-up. The attainment of political power or higher economic status often exalted the position of a class from non-privileged to privileged status. In fact, those who were known as Śūdra by caste gained higher status in society by dint of political power, as it is evident from the epigraphic and literary records of Bengal.⁴⁰ It is pointed out that the etymological derivation of the term Śūdra (śucam abhidudrāva, i.e. one who rushed into grief) and its philological interpretation (from kṣudra or small) reflect the miserable condition and lowest status and humble occupation of the Śūdras.⁴¹ So anybody relegated to this status would be classed as Śūdra. It appears that the Śūdra-hood was hereditary by nature, as it was a functional caste. The members of the non-privileged class can hardly be considered to have formed a water-tight compartment. The social structure was first stratified into a number of classes discharging their allotted social functions and later, into economically determined

40. cf. Tipperā C.P. of Lokanātha shows how Lokanātha's grandfather Pāraśava Keśava held high ministerial position. The Rāmacarita records the ascendancy of Kaivarta Divya to royalty.

41. R.S.Sharma, Śūdras in Ancient India, Delhi, 1958, P.38.

social groups graded in a hierarchy. The epigraphs of Bengal give us to understand that an alliance between some classes was sometimes practised to uphold their common interests. The clash of interests between the classes appears to have been a reality.

Priestly and ruling class :

Priestly and ruling classes often made an alliance for upholding their common interests. Under the patronage of the Imperial Guptas, the Brahmins were encouraged to settle in different parts of Bengal. The policy of the ruling authority to make liberal donation of lands, in the succeeding period, led to the rise of a landed intermediary class intervening between the king and the cultivators. Fiscal and judicial rights conferred on the Brahmin donees helped them to grab more and more power in society, on the one hand, and gain such political status as to make an alliance with the ruling class, on the other. It was for the maintenance of the Brāhmanical social order that the rulers of Bengal sought the guidance of Brahmin priests in the administrative affairs. Even the Buddhist Pāla rulers were no less interested in appointing Brāhmaṇa counsellors. It is known from the Bādal Pillar Inscr.⁴² of Nārāyaṇapāla that the members of a Brahmin

42? GL., P. 70.

family of Śāṇḍilya gotra formed an uninterrupted line of ministers under the Pālas. The principle of maintaining hereditary position of ministers continued to be followed during the Varman period. The authority of the Brāhmaṇas reached its apex during the Sena rule that witnessed the heyday of Brāhmanism under the zealous patronage of the ruling class. The texts of Smṛtinivandhas enjoining rigid caste-rules, laws of inheritance and legal procedure came out during this period and regulated to a great extent the relations between the State and the society. The exponents of such laws were often closely associated with the ruling authority and performed the roles of preceptor, priest or administrator of justice. Purohita or Mahāpurohita, appearing in the list of officials in the Sena-Varman records, seems to have occupied one of the most responsible positions in the administration. Besides, religious functionaries were recruited from among the Brāhmaṇas. The posts of religious functionaries, it may be pointed out, are conspicuous by their absence in the Pāla epigraphs. Their inclusion in the list of officials during the Sena-Varman period naturally suggests how under state-sanction Brāhmanism had its tightened grip upon the society. The introduction of Kulinism to raise the status of a section of Brāhmaṇas also indicates an anxiety on the part of the State to win over their allegiance and implement their injunctions as laws of the society. The

Brāhmaṇas instructed the kings on Rājadharmā as enunciated in the Brāhmaṇical works and the Kṣatriyas encouraged the Brāhmaṇas interpret sacred texts in such a way as the Brāhmaṇical social order based on Varnāśrama might remain undisturbed and the producing classes might remain engaged in the work of production without any scope of change in social position. The maintenance of status quo could enable the priestly and ruling classes enjoy the surplus production without any apprehension of a challenge from any quarter. The probability of clash of interests between the two upper varṇas could not, however, be ruled out.⁴³ The Kṣatriyas seem to have claimed superiority over the Brāhmaṇas in temporal affairs, limiting the latter's position in the spiritual domain. But the priestly class, by dint of their proven scholarship in Brāhmaṇical polity, acquired substantial amount of political and administrative power which the ruling class could not but acknowledge in their own political interests. That seems to explain why even the Buddhist Pāla rulers did not attempt to bring about a re-orientation of the relations between the State and the society from their religious bias. Rather, they consistently sought the supervision and guidance of Brahmin ministers in steering the ship of state through the sea of troubles.

43. Bhupendranath Datta, op. cit., PP. 11-14.

Ruling class and the landed - aristocracy :

The other prominent class in the society with whom the ruling class came closer was the official landed aristocracy comprising Mahāsāmanta, Sāmanta, Mahāmāṇḍalika, Mahāmahattara, Mahattara and Kuṭumbin. There were, again, two categories in the landed-aristocracy. Mahāsāmanta, Sāmanta and Mahāmāṇḍalika seem to have formed the first category to serve the king (Rājapādopajīvin) in the capacity of feudatories or vassals. The second category comprising Mahāmahattara, Mahattara and Kuṭumbin, lower in grade of the land-owning class, had their participation in the affairs of the State, whenever they were called for. Of the first category, some were politically defeated but reinstated rulers in their own territories and others seem to have been granted land in lieu of their military or administrative service. It is learnt from the Gayā Narasimha Temple Inscr.⁴⁴ (15th regnal year) and Gayā Kṛṣṇadvārikā Temple Inscr.⁴⁵ (15th regnal year) of the time of Nayapāla that Śūdraka was given the charge of Gayā-maṇḍala for his service to the Pāla king at the time of his tussle with the Kalacuri king Karṇa. From Sandhyākaranandin's Rāmacarita we come to know how the Mahāsāmantas

44. EI. XXXVI, P. 84ff.

45. Ibid., P. 86ff.

and Sāmantas were granted land by Rāmapāla in lieu of their military service. It is, however, difficult to determine the grades of those vassals in the light of data available from Bengal epigraphs. Sometimes, taking an opportunity of the weakness of the central authority, some feudatories set themselves up as independent rulers, as in the cases of Vaidyadeva known to us from the Kamauli copper-plate grant⁴⁶ and of Mahāsāmantādhipati Dommanapāla of the Sunderban copper plate grant.⁴⁷ It seems that Mahāmāṇḍalīkas and Māṇḍalīkas were not expected to render military service. They were held responsible for collecting revenues from the territory put in their charge. It was not unlikely that some of them were provincial governors or officers-in-charge of districts. Although they enjoyed semi-independent status, they were ultimately responsible to the king. From the records it is difficult to distinguish clearly between a maṇḍala and a bhukti.

The Mahattaras, belonging to the second grade of the landed aristocracy, were members of both Village-Advisory Board as well as District Advisory Board and as such they were known as Viṣaya~~va~~vahārin or saṁvyavahārin. Mahattaras

46. GL., P. 127ff.

47. EI. XXVII, P. 119.

played their significant role in land-transactions, as it appears from the land-charters under our study. They were to be kept informed about land-sale or land-donation. They were invited to witness the land-transactions in all cases. In view of a gradual shift of emphasis from mercantile economy to agrarian economy since the 8th century A.D., it is quite reasonable to infer that the land-owning classes enjoyed more power and prestige and generated a feudalistic trend in the order of the society. The decline of the mercantile community during the Pāla period appears to be testified by the absence of any reference to them in the land-grants. On the other hand, repeated mention of the members belonging to the landed aristocracy in the Pāla records seem to suggest their growing recognition in the society. The king representing the State could not but remain anxious to win over the allegiance and support of the landed aristocracy.

Landed aristocracy and the priestly class :

The official aristocratic class, deriving their pelf and power from agrarian economy, maintained cordial relations with the priestly class. The growing prosperity of the priestly class was caused not only by the liberal attitude of the kings towards them but also by the material support extended by the land-owning class to them from time to time. Like the monarchs,

the land-owners were also eager to earn religious merit by endowing the Brahmins with land-donations for the cause of the Vedic study, rites and rituals. Reasonably, the Brahmins remained obliged to them and attempted to uphold their class-interests by providing favourable interpretations of the legal injunctions prescribed by the Smṛtis in respect of the land-system.

Landed aristocracy and peasantry :

Landowners seem to have leased out their lands to the peasants on terms and conditions of tenancy and realised the rent from them. Direct contact between the king and the peasantry was snapped off by the rise of an intermediary class between them. The tenants were of different categories, namely, permanent tenants enjoying individual rights, share-croppers and the landless cultivators. The relations of the landowning class with different categories of peasantry probably varied in terms of the land-tenure and the rent-system. It was not unlikely that the relations between these two classes might have been strained on violation of certain terms and conditions of tenancy. In Bengal epigraphs, the donated lands or villages are said to have been exempted from all kinds of oppressions [Parihṛtasarvapīḍah]⁴⁸ in

48. cf. Monghyr C.P. Inscr. of Devapāla, CBI., P. 119.

favour of the donees. It appears, therefore, that the peasants had to bear the burden (pīḍā) of taxes like Bali, Bhāga, Śulka, Kara, Viṣṭi and Praṇaya. Under the tyranny of big land-owners, it is not unreasonable to assume, ~~that the~~ peasants seem to have been reduced to a disadvantageous position. When the crown-lands were transferred to the religious beneficiaries, free peasants, cultivating the crown-land, were directed to and make over all dues to the donees instead of the State. It has been suggested by some that the rise of the priestly class as intermediaries between the king and the peasants paved the way towards an oppression of the peasants by their leige-lord with the burden of a number of additional taxes including forced labour (viṣṭi), compulsion of being tied down to the soil or arbitrary ejection from the soil. But the epigraphic records hardly furnish us with any positive evidence with regard to this social phenomenon. The cultivators were to pay to the new donees only those taxes which they used to pay earlier to the king. There is hardly any indication of life-long bondage suffered by the landless cultivators. Theoretically, the Brahmin donee could not misuse his rights over the land, as it would undermine his authority. It is however, difficult to ascertain the practice due to lack of sufficient evidence at our disposal. Since the donee was invested with fiscal and judicial powers, he might have sometimes misused them, causing suffering to the peasants.

However, it was expected that the Brahmin land-owner should provide social security for the peasants, guard against the royal agents' encroachment on the rights of the peasants, put down social crimes and maintain law and order in the society.

Artisan and mercantile classes :

The habitats of the artisan and the mercantile classes were mainly localised in towns and cities (nigama). Their professional activities, being combined together, might promote the growth of commercial or mercantile capitalism. The finished products, manufactured by the artisans, found a good market at the initiative of the merchants. Artisans like weavers, potters, blacksmiths and carpenters might themselves sell their own products in the market. But the traders or merchants came in direct contact with those producers of industrial goods and were made sure of constant supply of merchandise for import and export. It might so happen that 'Śreṣṭhīs' or bankers made an investment in the industrial centres, especially to restore the sick industries. The skill and efficiency of the artisans (Kulika) used to be promoted, when they joined as members of a guild. Like the Kulikas, Śreṣṭhīs and the Sārthavāhas also organised their activities through guilds. This is evident from the seals

of the Gupta period found at Vaiśālī (Bāsārhi). The organisation of trade and industry through guilds appears to have continued even after the Gupta period. However, the fraternal relations between the industrial workers and the traders, that had been established on grounds of economic expediency, indicate the existence of social cordiality between the two classes.

The ruling class and the mercantile class :

The guilds of traders, merchants and artisans were independent corporations within the State, wielding considerable influence upon the economic life of the people, and were accorded recognition by the ruling authority in the Gupta period. The five Dāmodarpur copper-plate Grants suggest the inclusion of Guild-President (Nagaraśreṣṭhī), Chief-merchant (Sārthavāha) and Chief-artisan (Prathama-Kulika) in the Advisory Board that was constituted to assist the Viṣayapati or officer-in-charge of a district. The Chief traders also find mention in the Post-Gupta records.⁴⁹ It appears from the Pāla epigraphs that the social recognition to the mercantile class was gradually withdrawn, presumably because the guilds of artisans and merchants were gradually

49. Ibid., P. 83; EI. XVIII, P. 74.

attached with less importance from the economic point of view. The ruling authority realised that the people had become more dependent upon agrarian economy than on commercial economy. The social importance, that had been previously enjoyed by the mercantile class, came to be attached with the land-owning class. Ānandabhaṭṭa's Vallālacarita gives us to understand the Suvarṇavaṇīks (merchant in gold bullion) were degraded to a lower status in the society by the social reforms of the Sena king Vallālasena. It shows how in course of time the relations between the ruling class and the mercantile class were strained. In the Bṛhaddharma and Brahmavaivarta Purāṇas, the position of the Suvarṇavaṇīks is found relegated to that of Madhyama-saṁkara or Asat-Śūdra. But Gandhavaṇīk (dealer in spices & scent etc.) and Śāṅkhika (conch-shell dealer) are included in the Uttamasamkara or Sat-Śūdra group. The Purāṇic evidence indicates that simultaneously with the exclusion of Suvarṇavaṇīks, other mercantile groups did not suffer loss of their position in social estimation. The Maṅgal-Kāvyas of Bengal, which were not far removed in date from the Purāṇas in question, do suggest high social rank of the merchant-class. It seems to suggest a restoration of the position of this class sometime in the early medieval period. But so far as the evidence of the Pāla-Sena epigraphs is concerned, we have no reason to believe that the ruling authority considered the mercantile class as important to the State, society or economy.

Land-owning class and the mercantile class :

The artisan and trading classes appear to have exploited the surplus production of the agriculturists. The market-places (haṭṭa, haṭṭikā) in the villages, the centres of small trade-transactions, received regular supply of agricultural products from side of the land-owning class. Raw materials for industries were also provided by the agriculturists. The mercantile class was, therefore, dependent, to a great extent, on the contributions of the land-owning class. Without the co-operation of the land-owning class, the mercantile class could hardly flourish but the opposite was not always true.

While the relations between the classes were determined mainly by economic considerations, social prestige and privileges claimed by virtue of the nobility of birth was the criterion of caste-relations. But the meeting point between a class and a caste cannot be missed. Class is the generic soil in which grows caste-system with its complexities. The earliest social system of India based on the division into classes or varṇas laid down the foundation of elaborate jāti structure. The epigraphic records of Bengal, however, incidentally refer to a number of castes. But they indicate more prominently the caste-class hierarchy with Brāhmaṇa (Priestly class) at the top and Caṇḍāla at the bottom [cf. Brāhmaṇottorān

Mahottamottama-kutumbi-puroga-medāndhra-caṇḍāla-paryantān^{7.50}

The Purāṇas of Bengal, that is, the Bṛhaddharma and Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇas, on the other hand, emphasise upon the classification of castes graded as per higher and lower status assigned by the law-givers' injunctions with regard to different mixed-castes.

An attempt to find out the correspondence between classes and castes may^{not} be always fruitful. The priestly class corresponds to the Brahmin community, recognised as both varṇa and jāti. It is, however, difficult to trace an exact correspondence of other classes with mixed-castes of different grades as known from the Purāṇas. The ruling class generally corresponds to the Kṣatriya varṇa. Most of the ruling dynasties of Bengal claim Kṣatriyahood, although they might have originally belonged to a caste other than the Kṣatriya, as it has already been discussed. It appears from the martial occupation of the Ugra-caste prescribed in the Bṛhaddharmapurāṇa [Yuddhe kuśalatāsyāstu kṣatravṛtter-mahāmate]⁷⁵¹ that they represented the Kṣatriya caste in Bengal and probably came to be known as Ugra-Kṣatriya at a later period.

50. CBI., P. 168.

51. BRDP. III. XIV. 49.

The landed-aristocracy, often referred to in the epigraphs, might have represented the Vaiśya community. The feudatories like Sāmanta, Mahāsāmanta and Māṇḍalika derived their economic power from land but represented the ruling class with a reasonable claim to the Kṣatriyahood. Significantly, the members of the 'Āgari' caste of present day Bengal, who are said to be the descendants of Ugra or Ugra-Kṣatriya caste of the Purāṇas, represent the land-owning class and assume surnames resembling feudal titles like Sāmanta, Maṇḍala, Choudhuri etc. It is not, therefore, unreasonable to assume that the landed aristocracy comprising the feudatories actually belonged to the Ugra caste of ancient Bengal. The village-based landowning class might accommodate the agriculturist castes. We come to know of some agriculturist castes like Gopa, Dāsa and Kaivarta from the Purāṇas. It is difficult to ascertain if those castes were land-owning peasants or hired cultivators only. They might have been degraded from the status of the original Vaiśya community and reduced to the position of Śūdras in course of time. They seem to have been referred to as Karṣakas in the epigraphs. Again, the mercantile class might also represent the Vaiśya caste. Trading castes like Suvarṇavaṇik, Gandhavaṇik, Śāṅkhika (Śāṅkhavaṇik) and Tāmbulī might have derived their descent from the same caste.

The artisan class is represented by the Purāṇic mixed castes like Tantuvāya, Karmakāra, Taulika, Kāṁsakāra, Modaka, Mālākāra, Takṣan, Svarṇakāra, Tailakāraka, Śaundika etc. of them, some seem to have represented the Śūdra and others Vaiśya caste. The menial class accommodated within it the Purāṇic mixed castes like Nāpita, Gopa (writer), Rajaka, Dhīvara, Jālika, Caṇḍāla, Haḍḍipa, Dom, Bāgatīta, Carmakāra etc. They were antyajas living on the outskirts of the localities.

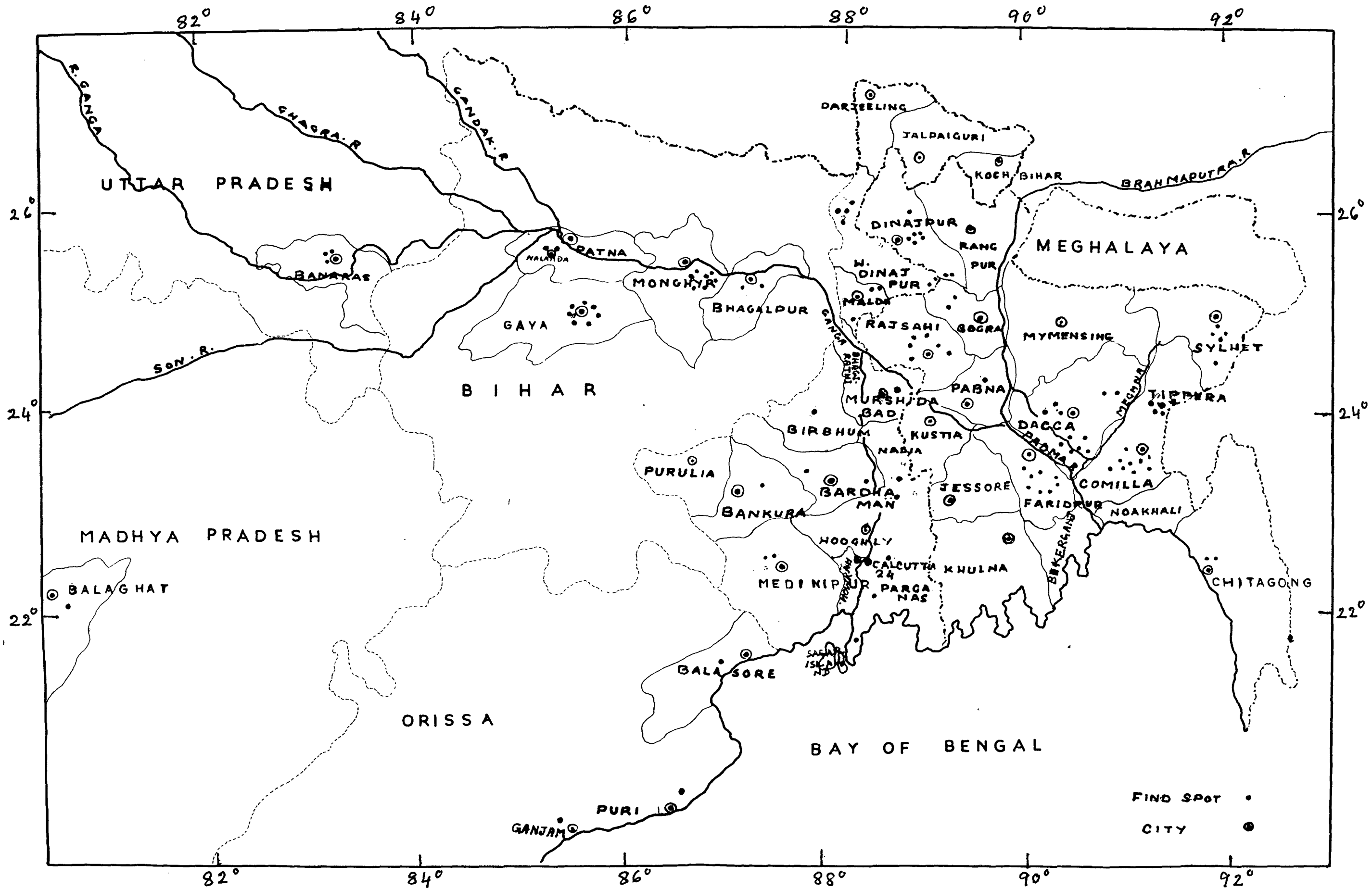
Thus, most of the castes enumerated in the Purāṇas (Brhaddharma and Brahmavaivarta) may be brought within the frame-work of class-structure of the society furnished by the epigraphs. The status of the castes concerned may be well conceived by the social status assigned to the corresponding class in the light of the epigraphic data. However, the process of social mobility, often caused by economic factors, did not help maintain status quo with regard to the position of a particular caste or class in the society.

Evolution of the society in Bengal :

The division of labour was not unknown to the pre-Aryan original inhabitants in Bengal. The religious, administrative, agrarian, industrial and commercial activities, in

their primitive forms, were quite known to the Austric-speaking people. The original stratification of the society, primarily based on the heredity of occupation, was gradually brought within the fold of the traditional caste-system as enunciated in the Dharmaśāstras, as a result of the Aryanisation in Bengal. But, in fact, least change was required to be brought about in the pre-existing set-up except establishing the supremacy of the Brahmins. In the Brāhmanical texts, the Puṇḍras, Suhmas, Vaṅgas and Rāḍhas are often referred to as Śūdras living outside the Aryan fold. What the Bṛhaddharma and Brahmavaivarta Purāṇas give us to understand is that the privileged Brahmin caste made an attempt to classify the Śūdras in Bengal and prescribe their gradation in accordance with the nature and merit of functions discharged by them. Some of the mixed-castes seem to have been more inclined towards the acceptance of the Brāhmanical culture, while others were not. The measurement of distance from the Brāhmanical fold served to measure the status of a particular caste. However, a comparative study of the Purāṇic data with those of the epigraphic records would show that the former provide a partial view of the social structure, while the latter furnish us with a wider perspective of the same. The Purāṇic evidence is hardly free from Brāhmanical bias and thus fails to trace the origin of

so-called mixed-castes from a more scientific point of view. There is least hint about the exact interrelation between castes except some injunctions for Brāhmaṇas' social behaviour with the Śūdras. On the other hand, the epigraphic records hardly conceal from our view the relations between different classes.



Key to the Map showing the findspots in the Inscriptions

1. Balaghat (M.P.) : Rāgholi C.P. of Jayavardhana.
2. Balasore (Orissa) : Irdā C.P. of Kamboja Nayapāla
(10th cent, A.D.).
3. Bankura (West Bengal) : Susuniā Rock Inscr. of Candrarman (4th cent, A.D.).
4. Bhagalpur (Bihar) : (i) Bhāgalpur C.P. of Nārāyaṇapāla
(9th century A.D.)
(ii) Bangāon C.P. of Vighrahapāla III
(11th century A.D.).
5. Birbhum (West Bengal) : Paikore Stone Inscr. of Vijaya-sena (12th century A.D.).
6. Bogra (Bangladesh) : (i) Mahāsthān Fragmentary Stone
Inscr. (c. 3rd cent. B.C.)
(ii) Baigrām C.P. of Kumāragupta
(5th cent. A.D.).
7. Burdwan (West Bengal) : (i) Mallasārul C.P. of Gopacandra (6th century A.D.)
(ii) Naihāṭi C.P. of Vallālasena
(12th century A.D.).

8. Chittagong (Bangladesh) : (i) Chittagong C.P. of
Kāntideva (12th cent A.D.)
(ii) Chittagong C.P. of Dāmodara-
deva (13th century A.D.)
9. Comilla (Bangladesh) : (i) Gunaighar C.P. of Vainyagupta
(6th century A.D.)
(ii) Tipperā C.P. of Lokanātha
(7th century A.D.)
(iii) Kailān C.P. of Śrīdhāraṇarāta
(7th century A.D.).
(iv) Deulbādi Image Inscr. of
Prabhāvatī (7th cent. A.D.)
(v) Sālban Vihār C.P. Inscrs. of
Bhavadeva, Āndandadeva,
Bālabhata (11th-12th cent.A.D.)
(vi) Mehār C.P. of Dāmodaradeva
(13th cent. A.D.).
10. Dacca (Bangladesh) : (i) Āshrafpur C.Ps. of Devakhaḍga
(7th cent. A.D.)
(ii) Dhullā C.P. of Śrīcandra
(11th-12th cent A.D.)
(iii) Madanpur C.P. of Śrīcandra
(11th-12th cent A.D.)

- (iv) Rāmpāl C.P. of Śrīcandra
(11th-12th cent. A.D.)
- (v) Dacca C.P. of Kalyānacandra
(11th-12th cent. A.D.)
- (vi) Vetkā Image Inscr. of Govinda-
candra (11th-12th cent. A.D.)
- (vii) Belava C.P. of Bhōjavarman
(12th cent. A.D.)
- (viii) Dacca Image Inscr of Lakṣmaṇa-
sena (12th cent. A.D.)
- (ix) Bhowāl C.P. of Lakṣmaṇasena
(13th cent. A.D.)
- (x) Madhyapārā C.P. of Viśvarūpasena
(13th cent. A.D.)
- (xi) Ādāvādī C.P. of Daśarathadeva
(13th cent. A.D.)

11. Dinajpur (Bangladesh)
- (i) Five Dāmodarpur C.P. grants
(5th-6th cents. A.D.)
 - (ii) Bādal Pillar Inscr. of the
time of Nārāyaṇapāla (9th cent.
A.D.)
 - (iii) Belwā C.P. of Mahīpāla I
(10th cent. A.D.)
 - (iv) Belwā C.P. of Vīgrahapāla III
(11th cent. A.D.)

12. Dinajpur (West Bengal) : (i) Bāngarh C.P. of Mahīpāla I
(10th cent. A.D.)
(ii) Bāngarh C.P. of Kuñjaraghaṭā-
varṣa (10th cent. A.D.)
(iii) Āmgāchi C.P. of Vīgraha-
pāla III, (11th cent. A.D.)
(iv) Rāmganj C.P. of Īśvaraghoṣa
(11th-12th cent. A.D.)
(v) Mānāhali C.P. of Madanapāla
(12th Cent. A.D.)
(vi) Tarpandighi C.P. of Lakṣmaṇa-
sena (12th cent. A.D.).

13. Faridpur (Bangladesh) : (i) Faridpur C.P.s of Dharmā-
ditya and Gopacandra (6th
cent. A.D.)
(ii) Ghugrāhāṭi C.P. of Samācāra-
deva (6th century A.D.)
(iii) Kedārpur C.P. of Śrīcandra
(11th-12th cent. A.D.)
(iv) B̥dilpur C.P. of Śrīcandra
(11th-12th cent. A.D.)
(v) Kulkudī Image Inscr. of
Govīndacandra (11th-12th
cent. A.D.)

- (vi) Sāmantasāra C.P. of Hari-
varman (11th-12th cent. A.D.)
- (vii) Madanpārā C.P. of Viśvarūpa-
sena (13th cent. A.D.)
- (viii) Edilpur C.P. of Keśavasena
(13th cent. A.D.)

14. Ganjam (Orissa) : Ganjam C.P. of the time of Śaśāṅka
(7th cent. A.D.).

15. Gaya (Bihar) :
- (i) Bodh-Gaya Stone Inscr. of
Dharmapāla (8th cent. A.D.)
 - (ii) Ghosrāwā Stone Inscr. of the
time of Devapāla (9th cent. A.D.)
 - (iii) Gaya Temple Inscr. of Nārāyaṇa-
pāla (9th cent. A.D.).
 - (iv) Bodh-Gaya Image Inscr. of
Gopāla II (10th cent. A.D.).
 - (v) Bodh-Gaya Image Inscr. of
Mahīpāla I (10th cent. A.D.)
 - (vi) Gaya Temple Inscrs. of Nayapāla
(11th cent. A.D.)
 - (vii) Gaya Stone Inscr. of Govindapāla
(12th cent. A.D.).

16. Malda (West Bengal) : (i) Khalimpur C.P. of Dharmapāla
(8th cent. A.D.)

(ii) Jājilpārā C.P. of Gopāla II
(10th cent. A.D.).

17. Midnapore (West Bengal) : Midnapore C.P.s of the time
of Śaśāṅka (7th cent. A.D.)

18. Monghyr (Bihar) : (i) Nandapur C.P. of the Gupta
period (5th cent. A.D.)

(ii) Monghyr C.P. of Devapāla (9th
century A.D.).

(iii) Valgudar Image Inscr. of the
time of Dharmapāla (8th cent.
A.D.)

(iv) Rajauma Stone Inscr. of Vighraha-
pāla I (9th cent. A.D.)

(v) Valgudar Image Inscr. of the
time of Madanapāla (12th cent.
A.D.)

(vi) Nongarh Image Inscr. of Madana-
pāla (12th cent. A.D.).

19. Nadia (West Bengal) : (i) Vappaghoṣavāṭa Grant of
Jayanāga (7th cent. A.D.)

(ii) Ānuliā C.P. of Lakṣmaṇasena
(12th cent. A.D.).

20. Nālandā (Bihar) : (i) Nalanda C.P. of Dharmapāla
(8th cent. A.D.)
(ii) Nālandā C.P. of Devapāla
(9th cent. A.D.)
21. Pabna (Bangladesh) : Mādhāinagar C.P. of Lakṣmaṇasena
(13th cent. A.D.)
22. Puri (Orissa) : Bhuvaneśvar Praśasti of Bhaṭṭa
Bhavadeva (11th-12th cent. A.D.)
23. Rajshahi (Bangladesh) : (i) Dhanāidaha C.P. of Kumāra-
gupta I (5th cent. A.D.)
(ii) Kalāṅkuri C.P. of the Gupta
period (5th cent. A.D.)
(iii) Pāhārpur C.P. of the Gupta
period (5th cent. A.D.)
(iv) Bhāturiā Stone Inscr. of
Rājyapāla (10th cent. A.D.)
(v) Deopārā Praśasti of Vijayasena
(12th cent. A.D.).
24. Sylhet (Bangladesh) : (i) Nidhānpur C.P.s of Bhāskara-
varman (7th cent. A.D.)

- (ii) Kālāpur C.P. of Sāmanta
Maruṇḍanātha (7th cent. A.D.)
- (iii) Paśchimbhāg C.P. of Śrīcandra
(11th-12th cent. A.D.)
- (iv) Bhāṭerā C.P. of Govinda
Keśavadeva (13th cent. A.D.)
- (v) Bhāṭerā C.P. of Īśānadeva
(13th cent. A.D.)

25. Tippera (Bangladesh) :
- (i) Baghaura Image Inscr. of
Mahīpāla I (10th cent. A.D.)
 - (ii) Nārāyanpur Image Inscr. of
Mahīpāla I (10th cent. A.D.)
 - (iii) Bhārellā Image Inscr. of
Ladāhacandra (11th-12th cent.
A.D.)
 - (iv) Maināmati C.P.s of Ladāhacandra
(11th-12th cent. A.D.).
 - (v) Mandhuk Image Inscr. of
Gopāla III (12th cent. A.D.)

26. Twenty-four Parganās (West Bengal) :
- (i) Barrackpore C.P.
of Vijayasena (12th cent. A.D.)
 - (ii) Govindapur C.P. of Lakṣmaṇa-
sena (12th cent. A.D.)

- (iii) Sundarban C.P. of Lakṣmaṇa-sena (12th cent. A.D.)
- (iv) Rakṣākālī Island (Sundarban) C.P. of Maḍommanapāla (13th century A.D.)

27. Vārāṇasī (U.P.) :
- (i) Sāranāth Image Inscr. of Jayapāla (9th cent. A.D.)
 - (ii) Sāranāth Image Inscr. of Mahīpāla I (10th cent. A.D.).
 - (iii) Kamauli Grant of Vaidyadeva (11th-12th cent. A.D.).

Addendum

Key to the Map : Location of the findspots of
Inscriptions.

18a. Murshidabad : Śaktipur C.P. of Lakṣmaṇasena.

LIST OF INSCRIPTIONS

CP. - Copper-plate, I. - Image, M. Metal, S. - Stone,
T. - Temple, G.E. - Gupta era, V.S. - Vikrama Saṁvat.

Maurya Record

3rd century B.C. (approx.)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Material</u>	<u>Name of the ruler</u>	<u>Findspot</u>	<u>References</u>
-	S.	-	Mahāsthān	S.I.I. 79; EI. XXI. 85; IHQ. 1934, P. 57, CBI. 39

Gupta Records

4th century A.D. (approx.)

-	Rock	Candravarman	Susuniā	S.I.I. 351; EI. XII. 317. CBI. 40
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5th century A.D.

113 G.E.	CP.	Kumārāgupta	Dhanāidaha	S.I.I. 287; EI. XVII. 347; CBI. 42
120 G.E.	DO	-	Kalāikuri	S.I.I. 352; EI. XXXI. 57; IHQ. XIX. 12.
124 G.E.	Do	Kumārāgupta	Dāmodarpur	SI.I. 290; EI. XV. 120, CBI. 45

<u>Date</u>	<u>Material</u>	<u>Name of the ruler</u>	<u>Findspot</u>	<u>References</u>
128 G.E. CP		Kumārāgupta	Dāmodarpur	Ibid. P.292; Ibid. P.128; CBI. 47.
128 G.E. Do		-	Bāigrām	SI. 355; EI. XXI. 78.
159 G.E. Do		-	Pāhārpur	SI.I. 359; EI. XX. 61.
163 G.E. Do		Budhagupta	Dāmodarpur	SI.I. 332; EI. XV. 135.
_____	Do	-	Do	SI.I. 328. CBI. 62
169 G.E. Do		-	Nandapur	SI.I. 382.

6th century A.D.

188 G.E. Do	Vainyagupta	Guṇaighar	IHQ. VI. 53.
224 G.E. Do	Śrī Gupta	-	SI.I. 337.

Post-Gupta Records

6th century A.D.

3rd reg yr.	Do	Dharmāditya	Faridpur	SI. 350; IA. XXXIX, 1910, P.195.
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<u>Date</u>	<u>Material</u>	<u>Name of the ruler</u>	<u>Findspot</u>	<u>References</u>
-	CP	Dharmāditya	Faridpur	SI. 354; IA. 1910, P.200.
18th reg. Do yr.	Do	Do	Do	SI. 357. IA., 1910, P. 204.
33(or 3) reg. yr.	Do	Gopacandra	Mallasārul	SI.I. 359; EI. XXIII.159.
7th reg. Do yr.	Do	Samācāradeva	Faridpur	Unpublished ref. HAB.
14th reg. Do yr.	Do	Do	Ghugrahāṭi	EI. XVIII. 74.

Pre-Pāla Records

7th century A.D.

-	CP		Nidhānpur	EI. XII. 65; XIX. 115; KS. P. 1ff., CPS P.
-	Do (nos.1 and 2)	Śaśāṅka	Midnapore	JRASBL. XI.1.
-	Do	Do	Ganjam	EI. VI. 144.
-	Do	Jayanāga	Vappaghoṣa-vāṭa	EI. XVIII. 60; XIX. 286.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Material</u>	<u>Name of the ruler</u>	<u>Findspot</u>	<u>References</u>
-	CP	Lokanātha	Tippera	EI. XV. 301; IHQ. XXIII.230.
-	Do	Śrīdhāraṇarāta	Kailān	SI. II. IHQ. XXIII. 221.
-	Do	Maruṇḍanātha	Kālāpur	CPS. 68.
-	Do	Jayavardhana	Rāgholi	EI. IX. 41.
79th reg yr.	Do (Nos. 1 and 2)	Devakhaḍga	Āshrafpur	MASB. I. 85; JPASB. NS. XIX. 375.
-	M.I.	Prabhāvatī (Devakhaḍga's wife)	Deulbāḍi	EI. XVII. 357.

Records of the Pālas and their contemporaries

8th century A.D.

26th reg. yr.	S.	Dharmapāla	Bodh-Gaya	JASB. N.S. IV. 101; GL. 29. CBI. 112.
32nd reg. yr.	CP.	Do	Khalimpur	EI. IV. 243; GL. 9; CBI. 96.
-	Do	Do	Nālandā	Nālandā. 84; EI. XXIII.290.

9th century A.D.

Date	Material	Name of the ruler	Findspot	References
9th reg. I. yr.		Devapāla	Kurkihar	JBORS. XXVI. 251.
25th reg. I. yr.		Do	Hilsā	JBORS. X. 33; Nalanda. 87.
33rd reg. CP. yr.		Do	Monghyr	EI. XVIII.304; GL. 33; CBI.115
39th or 35th reg. Do yr.		Do	Nālandā	EI. XVII. 318; V.R.S Monograph No. 1, JRASB.L. VII. 215.
-	S	Do	Ghosrāwā	IA. XVII.307; GL. 45; CBI.132
-	Votive	Do	Nālandā	Nālandā. 88.
-	S	Do	(Asutosh Museum)	ARIE. 1949-50, P. 8.
-	I	Do	Nālandā	Nalanda. 88.
3rd reg. I yr.		VigrahapālaI (or ŚūrapālaI) Bihar		JASB. N.S. IV. 108; PB. 57; JRASBL.IV. 390.
-	I	Jayapāla	Sāranāth	ASI. 1907-8.75.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Material</u>	<u>Name of the ruler</u>	<u>Findspot</u>	<u>References</u>
5th reg. S yr.		Vigrahapāla I	Rajaunā	IHQ. XXIX.301.
7th reg. Temple yr.		Nārāyaṇapāla	Gaya	P.B. 60; EI. XXXV. 225.
9th reg. S yr.		Do	Indian Museum	PB. 61-2.
17th reg. CP. yr.		Do	Bhāgalpur	IA. XV. 304; GL. 55; CBI.164.
54th reg. I yr.		Do	Bihar	IA. XLVII.110; SPP. (1328 B.S.) 169.
-	P	Do	Bādāl	EI. II. 160; GL. 70; CBI.151.

10th century A.D.

24th reg. P yr.		Rājyapāla	Nālandā	IA. XLVII. III; JRASBL. VX.7.
28th reg. I yr.		Do	Kurkihār	JBORS. XXVI. 246.
31st reg. Do yr.		Do	Kurkihār	JBORS. XXVI. 250.
32(or 31) Do reg. yr.		Do	Do	Ibid. P. 247.
32nd reg. Do yr.		Do	Do	Ibid. P. 248.

Date	Material	Name of the ruler	Findspot	References
-	S	Rājyapāla	Bhāturyā	EI. XXXIII. 150; IHQ. XXXI. 215.
1st reg. I yr.		Gopāla II	Nālandā	JASB. N.S.IV. 105; GL. 86.
	-	Do	Māndhuk (Tippera)	IHQ. XXVIII. 55.
6th reg. CP. yr.		Do	Jājilpārā	JAS. XVII.137; Bhāratavarṣa, 1344B.S., Pt.I, P. 264.
-	I	Do	Bodh-Gaya	JASB. N.S. IV. 105; GL. 88.
3rd (2nd) Do reg. yr.		Vigrahapāla-II	Kurkihār	JBORS. XXVI. 37, 240.
8th reg. Terra-cotta yr.		Do	Do	Ibid. 37.
19th reg. I yr.		Do (II or III)	Do	Ibid. 36, 239.
19th reg. I yr.		Do	Do	Ibid. 37, 240.
1083 (V.S.) Do		Mahīpāla I	Sāranāth	IA. XIV. 139; JASB. 1906, P. 445, CBI. 220.
3rd reg. Do yr.		Do	Baghaurā	EI. XVII. 355.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Material</u>	<u>Name of the ruler</u>	<u>Findspot</u>	<u>References</u>
4th reg. I yr.		Mahipāla I	Nārāyanpur	IC. IX.121.
5th reg. CP. yr.		Do	Belwā	EI. XXIX. 1; SPP. Vol. 54, 41; JASL. XVII. 117.
9th reg. Do yr.		Do	Bāngarh	EI. XIV. 324; GL. 91; CBI.
11th reg. S yr.		Do	Nālandā	JASB. N.S. IV. 106; GL. 101.
11th reg. I yr.		Do	Bodh-Gaya	PB. 75.
13th reg. Do yr.		Do	Vālgudar	EI. XXVIII.137.
31st (21) Do reg. yr.		Do	Kurkihār	JBORS. XXVI. 245.
48th reg. Do yr.		Do	Imādpur	IA. XIV. 165;; JRASBL. VII. 218; XVI. 247.
	Do	Do	Tetrāwan	ASC.I. 39; III. 123, No. 11.
	P	Kunjaragha- tavorsa	Bāngaḍa	MASB. V.68; JASB. N.S. VII. 619.
13th reg. CP. yr.		Nayapala	Irdā	EI. XXII.150.

11th century A.D.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Material</u>	<u>Name of the ruler</u>	<u>Findspot</u>	<u>References</u>
15th reg. T yr.		Nayapāla	Gaya	EI. XXXVI.86.
15th reg. Do yr.		Do	Do	EI. XXXVI.84; GL. 110; CBI.142
5th reg. T yr.		Vigrahapāla III	Gaya	EI. XXXVI.89; PB. 81.
11th reg. CP. yr.		Do	Belwā	EI. XXIX. 9; JASL. XVII.117.
12th reg. Do yr.		Do	Āmgāchi	EI. XV. 293; GL. 121.
13th reg. I yr.		Do	Bihar	PB. 112.
17th reg. CP. yr.		Do	Bangāon (Bhagalpur)	EI. XXIX. 48; IHQ. XXVIII. 54, f.n. 16.
24th reg. I yr.		Do (II or III)	Naulāgaḍh	JBRs. XXXVII Pt. III, P.1.
3rd reg. Do yr.		Rāmapāla	Tetrāwan	JASB. N.S. IV. 109; PB. 93; JRASBL. IV.390.
14th reg. S yr.		Do	Monghyr Dt	ARIE. 1949-50, P. 8.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Material</u>	<u>Name of the ruler</u>	<u>Findspot</u>	<u>References</u>
26th reg. I yr.		Rāmapāla	Ārmā	Ibid. 1960-1 P. 17.
37th reg. S yr.		Do	Monghyr	ARIE. 1949-50, P. 8.
42nd reg. I yr.		Do	Chañḍimau	PB. 93-4.
-	S	Do	Asutosh Museum	ARIE. 1949-50, P. 8.

Records of the Contemporaries of the Pālas

11th-12th century A.D.

2nd reg. CP. yr.		Bhavadeva	Asiatic- Society, Calcutta	JASL. XVII. (1951), 83-94.
-	Do	Do	Sālvān Vihāra (Lalmāi- Maināmatī Hills)	Indian Palaeo- graphy, P.135.
12th reg. Do yr.		Ānandadeva	Do	Unpub. ref. PCCRB. P. 39.
-	Do	Bālabhaṭa	Do	Unpub. Ibid. P. 35.
-	Do	Kāntideva	Chittagong	EI. XXVI. 313-18.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Material</u>	<u>Name of the ruler</u>	<u>Findspot</u>	<u>References</u>
5th reg. CP. yr.		Sricandra	Paśchim- bhāg (Sylhet)	CPS. 81; EDEP. 31. II. 92.
-	Do	Do	Dhuttā	EI. XXXIII. 134.
44th (46) reg. yr.	Do	Do	Madanpur	EI. XXVIII. 51, 337.
-	Do	Do	Rāmpāl	EI. XII. 136; IB. 1; CBI. 222
-	Do	Do	Kedārpur	EI. XVII. 188; IB. 10; CBI. 231.
-	Do	Do	Edilpur	EI. XVII. 189- 90
24th reg. Do yr.		Kalyāncan- dra	Dacca	PIHC. 23, Pt. I, P. 36.
18th reg. I yr.		Laḍahacan- dra	Bhārellā	EI. XVII. 349.
-	CP.	Do	Maināmati	PIHC. 23, Pt. I, P. 36; EDEP.
-	Do	Do	Do	Ibid.
-	Do	Do	Chārptra Murā (Lalmai Maināmati) Hills)	Unpub. ref. PCCRB, P. 43.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Material</u>	<u>Name of the ruler</u>	<u>Findspot</u>	<u>References</u>
-	CP.	Laḍahacandra	Chārpātra Murā (Lalmai Maināmati Hills)	Ibid.
-	Do	Govinda-candra	Maināmati	Ibid.
12th reg. I yr.		Do	Kulkudī	EI. XXVI. 24; XXVIII. 339.
23rd reg. Do yr.		Do	Vetkā	EI. XXVII. 26; SI. II. 101.
5th reg. CP. yr.		Bhojavarman	Belāva	EI. XII. 37; IB. 14; CBI. 236.
-	Do	Harivarman	Sāmanta-sār	EI. XXX. 255; IB. 14.
-	T	Bhaṭṭa Bhavādeva	Bhuvaneswar	EI. VI. 88; IB. 25; CBI. 350
-	CP.	Sāmalavarman	Vajrayoginī	EI. XXX. 259.
35th reg. Do yr.		Īśvaraghoṣa	Rāmganj	IB. 149.
14th reg. I yr.		Gopāla III		IHQ. XXVIII; ASI. 1936-7, P. 130.
-	Do	Do	Māndhuk	IHQ. XXVIII. 55.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Material</u>	<u>Name of the ruler</u>	<u>Findspot</u>	<u>References</u>
-	S	Gopāla III	Nimdighi	IHQ. XVII. 207; PB. 102; EI. XXXV. 228.
3rd reg. I yr.		Madanpāla	Bihar	ASC. III. 124, No. 6.
8th reg. CP. yr.		Do	Mānāhali	JASB. IXIX.68; GL. 147. CBI.211
14th reg. I yr.		Do	Jaynagar	ASC. III. 125; JRASBL. VII. 216.
14th reg. P yr.		Do	Ārmā	EI. XXXVI. 42.
18th reg. I yr. (1083 saka)		Do	Valgudar	EI. XXVIII.145.
1201 (V.S.)	Do	Do	Nongadh	EI. XXXVII. 41.
1232 (V.S.)	S	Govindapāla	Gaya	P.B. 109.

Records of the Senas and their Vassals

12th century A.D.

62nd reg. CP. yr.		Vijayasena	Barrackpur	EI. XV. 278; IB. 57.
-	T	Do	Deopārā	EI. I. 305; IB. 42.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Material</u>	<u>Name of the ruler</u>	<u>Findspot</u>	<u>References</u>
-	I	Vijayasena	Paikore	ASI. 1921-2, P. 78; IB.168.
9th reg. I yr.	I	Vallālasena	Sanokhar	EI. XXX. 78; IHQ. XXX. 212.
-	CP.	Do	Naihāti	EI. XIV. 156; IB. 68; CBI.259
2nd reg. Do yr.	Do	Lakṣmaṇasena	Govinda pur	IB. 92; CBI.272.
2nd (3rd) CP. reg. yr.	CP.	Do	Tarpandighi	EI. XII. 6; CBI.296
2nd (3rd) Do reg. yr.	Do	Do	Sundarban (Kultalā)	IB. 169; CBI.290
3rd reg. Do yr.	Do	Do	Ānuliā	IB. 81; CBI.303.
3rd reg. yr.	I	Do	Dacca	JASB. (1913) 289; IB.116.
6th reg. CP. yr.	CP.	Do	Śaktipur	EI. XXI. 211.
1118 Saka	Do	Dommanapāla	Rakṣākāli (Sunderban)	EI. XXX. 42.

Records of the Senas and their successors

13th century A.D.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Material</u>	<u>Name of the ruler</u>	<u>Findspot</u>	<u>References</u>
27th reg. yr.	CP.	Lakṣmanasena	Bhowal	EI. XXVI. 1; JASB. VIII. 1.
-	Do	Do	Mādhāi- nagar	JASB. (1909), 467; IB. 106.
14th reg. yr.	Do	Viśvarūpa- sena	Madanpādā	EI. XXXIII. 315; IB. 132; CBI. 313.
-	Do	Do	Madhyapādā (Sahitya Parisat)	IHQ. II. 77; IB. 140; IHQ. IV. 760.
3rd reg. yr.	Do	Keśavasena	Edilpur	JASB. N.S. X. 99; IB. 118; CBI. 320; EI. XXXIII. 320.
1156 (Saka)	Do	Dāmodara- deva	Mehār	EI. XXVII. 182; XXX. 51.
1158 (Saka)	Do	Do	Śobhārām- pur	EI. XXX. 184.
1165 (Saka)	Do	Do	Chittagong	IB. 158.
-	Do	Daśaratha- deva	Ādāvādi	IB. 181; Bhāratavarṇa 1332 (B.S.), Pt. I, P. 78.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Material</u>	<u>Name of the ruler</u>	<u>Findspot</u>	<u>References</u>
↓	CP	Daśaratha-deva	Pākāmodā	Itihāsa, VIII. 1346-65 (B.S.) P. 160.
1151 (Kali Era)	Do	Govinda Keśavadeva	Bhāterā	EI. XXIX, 277; CPS. 153.
17th reg. yr.	Do	Īśānadeva	Do	PASB. 1880, 141; CPS. 184.
1141 (Śaka) 17th reg. yr.	Do	Raṇavaṅkamalla Harikāladeva	Mainā-mati	IHQ. IX, 282.
83rd Lakṣmana Era	S	Pīṭhīpati Ācārya Jayasena	Jānibighā	JBORS. IV, 273, 266. IA. XIVIII, 48.
-	S	Pīṭhīpati Ācārya Buddhasena	Bodh Gaya	IA. XIXIII, 44.

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Jīmūtavāhana,	<u>Dāyabhāga,</u>
_____ ,	<u>Kālaviveka</u>
_____ ,	<u>Vyavahāramātrkā</u>
Śukra,	<u>Nītisāra</u>
Śūlapāṇi,	<u>Kālaviveka</u>
_____ ,	<u>Prāyaścitta-viveka</u>
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